

**THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSICAL
AS AN AUTHENTIC, INTEGRATED PERFORMING ARTS EXPERIENCE**

by

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ABSTRACT

While musicals are often common arts activities in high schools in North America, little has been written about their place in elementary schools. This is surprising when many elementary schools, particularly independent schools, are starting to include them in their fine arts programming.

This thesis looks carefully at the elementary school musical by first undertaking a review of literature connected to the staging of musicals. The research and writings of various theorists and educators are examined to determine whether or not a school musical can be an authentic, integrated performing arts experience for students. Two case studies of school musicals undertaken at a co-educational independent school for kindergarten to grade seven students in metropolitan Vancouver, Canada are then presented and described. The first of these involves children in kindergarten through grade four who participated in a musical written for them, *Once Upon a Tale*; the second of these involves children in grades five through seven who participated in a *Broadway Junior* production, *Fiddler on the Roof*. In each case, detailed reflections are given by the author, a teacher who was involved directly with each of these productions in varying capacities. Most importantly, this qualitative research gives voice to the participants directly involved with these school musicals, the students. Their open-ended questionnaire responses and observations are considered by the author; insights are then offered as connections are made between student comments and the literature. In particular, the issues of arts integration, entertainment, aesthetic awareness and artistic skills growth, personal growth, and community building are all examined.

Ultimately, it is determined that in each case study the musical served as an authentic, integrated performing arts experience with benefits for both individual participants and the independent school community as a whole. These benefits included the growth of various students in their musical skills, artistic appreciation, and self confidence – and the building of a caring community through teamwork and appreciation for the talents of one another. Recommendations are then presented so that authentic musical productions might best be included as components of balanced arts programs at other elementary schools.

DEDICATION

*To my family,
whose unconditional love and support mean the world to me.*

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CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Musical theatre rose to popularity in the twentieth century, as many people became enamoured with its glitz and glamour. When one thinks of musicals, in fact, it is very likely that they first think of the lights of Times Square and the excitement of Broadway. Perhaps what people don't think of so quickly when they hear the word 'musical' is a vehicle for performing arts education. And yet, in the 1960s, musicals became popular additions to high school arts programs, and in the 1980s they became part of many elementary school programs, too (Van Houten, 1999, p. 47). One need only look to the current popularity on the recent *High School Musical* movie trilogy to see that Van Houten (1999) is correct when she calls school musicals "an established tradition in [North] American education" (p. 58).

This is certainly the case at many independent schools, where the money is there to fully fund music programs, the interest is there amongst the student population, and the expectation is there from the parent community to see an impressive performance that features their children on stage. Indeed, at the independent elementary school where I teach, a spring musical is a well-established tradition that has been a part of the performing arts department's offerings for the school's entire fifteen year history.

Surprisingly, this is done almost like clockwork, without anyone questioning why this tradition exists. This does not appear to be an isolated event, either, as relatively little has been written about the educational value of school musical productions at all. This is particularly true of musicals undertaken at the elementary school level, and even more so the case of an independent elementary school. It is my task, therefore, to find

out more about the educational role that a musical theatre production might play in a school such as this, both for the individual participants and for the school community as a whole. Specifically, the question that this dissertation will explore is the following: Can an elementary school musical serve as an authentic, integrated performing arts experience with benefits for both the student as individual and the independent school community?

Definitions

If I am to effectively explore the problem that has been set out, it is important that I first define the terms. Deconstructing the question suggests that there are several terms worthy of definition and discussion at this point: ‘elementary school musical’, ‘integrated performing arts’, ‘authentic...arts experience’, ‘individual’, and ‘independent school community’. Each of these shall presently be examined.

By *musical*, I am referring to what *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1986) calls a “musical comedy” (p. 518). This is a popular music form that developed in the twentieth century, “similar to European operetta, with spoken dialogue developing dramatic situations appropriate for song, ensemble numbers, and dance” (ibid). Musicals are often associated with operettas and operas, which trace their roots to the 17th century in Italy. Wilson (1994) explains that “*Opera* is a drama set entirely to music ... including not only the arias but also the transitional sections between them, known as recitatives...” whereas “*Operetta* contains scenes of spoken dialogue that alternate with songs” (pp. 210, 211). Both of these set the stage for the modern North American musical, as did other forerunners, including the popular *vaudeville* and *burlesque* shows of the late 1800s and early 1900s (ibid, p. 212). These shows were like musicals, in that they combined music, dance, and drama, but differed in that they did not have a set storyline and were,

in essence, variety shows made up of several different motifs. For the modern elementary school teacher, they are perhaps best compared to the annual school Christmas concert, which may include a collection of class performances, each different and often only connected by a loose theme, if at all.

Though these concerts clearly have their place in the elementary school, they are not the focus of this thesis. Rather, I am looking at a show that has a set script, as does the “*book musical*” which became popular in North America around the start of the twentieth century (Wilson., 1994, p. 213). These productions, the first well-known-one of which is *Showboat* (1927), had characters that interacted in a set storyline that was enhanced by related songs and dances (ibid, p. 215).

A musical is also often referred to as musical theatre or music-theatre, which Paynter and Paynter (1974) describe as “the total integration of all those elements of human expression which we call art” (p. 9). In this way, through its integration of the performing arts, it has been argued that the musical becomes “an art form in itself” (Gray, 1988, p. 2). Richard Kislán (1995) agrees, boldly claiming that “Musical theater is *total theater*, an artistic system that ... encourages the use of techniques beyond the spoken word for projecting dramatic ideas ... [and is therefore] ... the most collaborative form in all the arts...”(p. 4). To this end, he explains that “Music can reinforce the emotion in drama in a way that cannot be duplicated by language alone” and notes that both “demand movement”, making “theirs an allied destiny” (pp. 214, 215).

Kislán identifies four different types of musicals: the light and fun “musical comedy” as exemplified by *Annie Get Your Gun*; the more serious and developed “musical play” such as *Fiddler on the Roof*; the charming “modern operetta” as in *The*

Sound of Music; and the “popular opera” where “everything is set to music”, as in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (pp. 174-176). His definitions are appreciated in that they help to clarify that not all musicals are light in subject matter. While many will be at the elementary school, it is important to remember that not all musicals are “comedy” in the way that we commonly think of today; many tackle important issues, but do so in an integrated fashion.

Lest some think that musicals are only lavish, Broadway-style productions, Novak (1988) explains that “Musicals come in all shapes and sizes” (p. 3). This serves the definition by reminding us that smaller, elementary school productions that integrate music, drama, and dance are no less musicals than their multi-million dollar cousins. Therefore, let the definition of *elementary school musical* be a dramatic production undertaken by any children in kindergarten through grade seven that follows a set storyline, the script of which unfolds through, and is enhanced by, music and dance.

By *arts integration*, I am referring to the possibility of the various arts working together, rather than as isolated entities. In the case of the elementary school musical, I am specifically interested in how the performing arts of music, drama, and dance can intertwine and intermix, maintaining their artistic integrity while supporting one another. This is, of course, a shift from what often happens in schools, where subjects are compartmentalized and separated, each treated as completely independent from all others. Eisner (1985) explains how more standardized tests and greater calls for accountability have influenced compartmentalization. As schools have felt these pressures, the curriculum has been broken into small pieces to ensure mastery. This “fragmentation” has led to many students being unable to see “how each piece is a part of a larger whole”

(Eisner, 1985, p. 33). The integration of the arts attempts to address this, by reconnecting art forms that should and do fit naturally together.

Wilson (1994) explains: “Throughout theater history, drama has been closely associated with music and dance” (p. 209). For example, he notes that this was the case in Ancient Greece over 2000 years ago, when “choral sections were performed to the accompaniment of music and dance movements” in Greek tragedy (ibid). Looking at the question of whether or not these Greek tragedies could be seen as comparable to the opera of his time, and thus, for the purposes of this thesis, the modern day musical, Rousseau concludes that there was certainly a relationship between theatre and music in these historic productions, which he compares most closely with the opera’s recitative (p. 449). In this way, he acknowledges a natural integration of the two art forms into one common purpose. Paynter and Paynter (1974) explain that this was also the case in other ancient cultures, where the arts were “inseparable” both from each other and from daily life, and is still the case in many current cultures beyond the west, where no word exists for the arts as separate entities (p. 9). At its finest, this is what *integrated performing arts* are: a seamless fitting together of music, dance, and drama so that they become unified as one.

By an *authentic arts experience*, I am referring to an experience that is not only about creating a final product, be that visual artwork or a musical performance, but rather, one that is also about “expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture” as we go through the process of creation (Eisner, 2002, p. 3). Dewey (1934) would call this “*an experience*”, contrasting it with the mundanity of daily life’s general

experiences; there is a sense of wholeness that unifies this experience and makes it meaningful (pp. 36-38). Eisner explains that through experiences such as these participants come to see that “language and quantification are not the only means through which human understanding is secured or represented” (2002, p. 204). Authentic arts experiences, then, help people to find the balance between head and heart, between reason and emotion.

What I am referring to, of course, are lived experiences that promote aesthetic understanding. Reimer (1965) examines how these moments occur for students and explains that they do not happen on their own; rather, they require a teacher to facilitate opportunities for learning new concepts, analysis, and performing (p. 35). Like Eisner, he warns against performance being seen as “an end in itself”, but does believe that a hands-on approach such as this is important for elementary-school-aged students as they seem to learn best by doing (ibid). This component becomes an important part of the definition: authentic arts experiences require active student involvement and artistic engagement.

Estelle Jorgensen would agree. In her book, *Transforming Music Education* (2003), she promotes a shift in the teaching of education, particularly music education, to an “artistic worldview” where more and more of these authentic arts experiences are a reality (p. 29). Building on the ideas of philosophers such as Elliott, Palmer, Reichling, Senyshyn, Stublely, and Yob, Jorgensen promotes a new music curricula that “emphasize(s) opportunities for students to interact actively in the process of music making... in ways that are very accessible” (p. 88). She promotes making music a hands-on, lived part of our daily lives with a breaking down of the lines between high and low

art, and believes that these experiences have the power to ultimately connect us as human beings (p. 110). As we work together to experience, appreciate, and understand music, we also come to “better understand [ourselves] and society” (ibid). This is a beautiful way to explain the power that an authentic arts experience might have, and leads to the definition of an *authentic arts experience* as an engaging, hands-on opportunity in the arts which requires both thinking and feeling, ultimately enabling the participant to grow both as an artist and as an individual as (s)he makes new discoveries.

The task then is to define what is meant by an *individual*, to which I turn to Senyshyn’s article, “A Kierkegaardian Perspective on Society and the Status of the Individual as a Performing Musician” (1999). Senyshyn begins this piece by reminding his readers that “The term ‘individual’ for Kierkegaard is more than just another person in the generic sense. For him, an individual is a specific human being – a leader – who must struggle to resist the leveling of the masses” that Kierkegaard warns is occurring all around us (p. 80). To prevent this "leveling", a performer must have the “spiritual courage” not to conform (ibid, pp. 82, 83). Rather, she must be willing to put herself out there and make herself vulnerable as she shares something of her unique essence in her art, requiring great risk-taking, which is only possible with the confidence that comes from having a strong self concept. In this sense, an *individual* is a person like no one else, who celebrates and takes pride in her uniqueness and is open to sharing this with others.

If this sounds a lot like an artist, it is. Kierkegaard recognized that “the artist must act as a spokesperson and prophet for her age” (Senyshyn, 1999, p. 90). Senyshyn agrees, explaining that the “dedicated performing artist” is a true individual, particularly

when she recognizes that she can overcome her role as “passenger” in the metaphorical vehicle that is life, and become the driver of her own destiny, rather than just comfortably fitting in and going along with the majority (ibid, p. 91). *Individuals*, then, are people who celebrate who they are. They have the confidence to include a piece of themselves in their art and in their daily lives because they truly know themselves as people; individuals are leaders.

Many independent schools pride themselves on building confident individuals who will be leaders in our world. For example, Beachview School (a pseudonym), the independent school where the case studies in this dissertation take place, claims in their mission statement that the school “develops well-rounded graduates with a deep sense of personal integrity who have the moral character, love of learning and self-confidence to realize their full potential in a post-secondary environment and in society at large... [as they] make a difference in the world” (no reference given to protect anonymity). Before a difference can be made globally, however, a difference must first be made locally. For this reason, it is important that the school itself is the starting place as an *independent school community* is defined.

Initially, it appears to be an easy term to define. “Schools” can be quickly identified as places of formal learning, and “independent schools” are “...those schools, not owned and operated by the province...” (Federation of Independent School Associations, n.d.). An *independent school community*, then, is those people who are associated with that private educational institution, including students, faculty (teachers and administration), support staff, and immediate families (parents/guardians and siblings). The definition need not stop there. Such a community might also include those

who are not necessarily geographically connected to the school, but still feel a connection in some way, including the students' extended families, the families of the faculty and support staff, and even neighbours, friends, and individuals of other institutions (such as seniors at a local care home that the school's students visit). The openness of the word 'community' makes the definition become more complex, particularly when one considers its connection to the arts.

Cohen-Cruz (2005) writes of the importance of the inclusionary nature of the performing arts, where art is "integrated into people's lives, expressing and bestowing meaning" (p. 189). She down-plays the "modernist idea of art as a self-contained domain", calling it a "blip on the screen" (ibid), and warns that "emphasis on individual genius to the exclusion of collective genius can close down people not so identified and make them less likely to participate in any artistic experience" (p. 93).

While much of what Cohen-Cruz says has merit in its attempt to build community, it also seems to go against our definition of the *individual*. Kierkegaard expresses a similar concern in his work *The Present Age* (1962). Kierkegaard explains how, in fact, it is often because of uniting with others that individualism is lost because while joining together "strengthens numerically", it weakens one ethically (p. 79). He does, however, make it clear that this does not preclude community-building altogether. He explains that "It is only after the individual has acquired an ethical outlook, in face of the whole world, that there can be any suggestion of really joining together" (ibid). Who would have thought that a word as seemingly simple as *community* could require such important moral considerations?

Noddings (1984) shares Kierkegaard's fear that individuals can be dehumanized. Whereas Kierkegaard writes of a "phantom public", however, she writes of "systematic dehumanization" through the patriarchy of education (pp. 192, 193). Noddings holds out hope that this can be overcome through the creation of a "community of caring" (p. 199). By this, she means *community* in the sense that it is ideally envisioned: a connection of people who are united in their concern for each other. Building on the work of Martin Buber (1958), Noddings explains how the relationship between the "cared-for" and "the one-caring" is mutual (p. 48). She writes that "As I care for others and am cared for by them, I become able to care for myself" (p. 49), addressing Kierkegaard's concern that the ethical be considered, and also appears to recognize that a balance is needed between both individual and community. In a *community* as Noddings and I envision it, the supporting of others and their returned reciprocal care both contribute to bettering the individual as the group is strengthened. The final definition of an independent school community is thus reached. An *independent school community* is a group of individuals who are connected to an independent school and/or to each other through caring.

Now that the terms that are pertinent to the central question of this dissertation have been defined, I shall discuss the need for this study.

Need for the Study

Very little has been written on school musicals, particularly in recent years. What has been written is almost always focused on high school musical productions, with only occasional pieces that focus on middle schools. At the same time, many schools, particularly independent schools, offer general elementary music programs that include a school musical as a component. If this is the case, it is important that more research be

done in this area. Others agree, with some pointing specifically to the need for further studies that look at “student attitudes towards elementary school music”, particularly where “...student experiences can be compared against claims in the literature” (Van Houten, 1999, p. 85). It is my intention to do this, taking the literature and connecting it to what elementary school students have to say about their participation in a school musical. It is my hope that this will ultimately allow us to examine the authenticity of the integrated, educational experience that is the elementary school musical, as well as its effects on both individual participants and the independent school community as a whole.

Van Houten’s 1999 doctoral dissertation, *High School Musical Theatre and the Meaning Students Give to Their Involvement*, serves as inspiration for this study, as it invites students to share their perspectives on participating in high school musicals. The author recognizes the value in not only observing students, but also in giving them a voice in their education, something which I believe is particularly important as authenticity in arts education is pursued. Because Van Houten’s study deals only with high school students, it seems that a similar study that focuses on younger students and their experiences with school musicals is needed. It is my hope that my research and writing in its examination of elementary school musicals will add a new piece to the ever-growing arts education canon.

Research Methods Used

I have chosen qualitative research methods, which rely on “detailed descriptions” and “direct quotations”, rather than the numerical data of a quantitative study (Patton, as quoted in Merriam, 1988, pp. 67, 68). I believe that this descriptive nature makes a qualitative study a natural fit for the realm of arts education, for pictures can be

metaphorically painted with words, allowing the reader to relive an experience with the support of the commentary provided, and learn from it as she does. In this way, greater understanding is arguably possible than through an analysis of numbers or similar data. This is particularly true when specific cases are studied in detail, observations are shared, and participant reflections are examined. When we are attempting to understand a shared experience, as is the case in education, is there anything more powerful than studying the personal reflections of participants? Are not their words much more powerful than the numerical data of quantitative studies? “Case study research, and in particular qualitative case study, is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (Merriam, 1988, p. 2).

As we seek to understand the ‘phenomenon’ that is the elementary school musical, and determine its authenticity as an integrated arts experience, it makes sense to undertake a thorough examination of specific, lived examples. An understanding is acquired by examining these particular cases in great detail. Conclusions may then be drawn and recommendations made, ideally for transference to similar cases in the future. For this reason, my study will examine two specific cases of school musicals undertaken at an independent elementary school in metropolitan Vancouver, Canada. In each case, detailed reflections are given by the author, a teacher who was involved directly with each of these productions in varying capacities. Background is given, the process undertaken is explained, and observations are described – from the auditions, through the rehearsals, to the on-stage productions.

Most importantly, for balance and legitimacy, comments from students who participated in these musicals are included and used as the basis for the case study

descriptions. These comments were collected via a questionnaire (Appendix A), which was chosen as a means to collect data because of its permanency. Unlike answering questions at interviews, completing questionnaires provides respondents with time to think carefully about their responses and modify them before submission, if desired. This was enhanced in both cases described in this dissertation, as time was provided between the end of each musical and the completion of the questionnaire by the students so that memories could bloom and opinions could develop.

Questionnaires also allow many individual voices to be heard, ensuring that the softer-spoken ones which could be lost in the crowd when oral commentary is gathered are acknowledged. All student participants were invited to complete the questionnaire and were able to do so once they and their parents had signed the consent form. For anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout this dissertation, as was promised would be the case. Trends are identified based on recurring responses so that conclusions may be drawn, but individual voices are not silenced. This is particularly true of an open-ended questionnaire such as the one designed for this study, where questions demand multi-word answers rather than circled 'rating' values. Nevertheless, it is a reality that questions can lead respondents in a particular direction, so the main questions on this questionnaire were deliberately worded in a way that allowed for multiple responses and, in some cases, even multiple interpretations. To ensure that a variety of students would be given a voice, the first case study considered the comments of younger elementary school students (grade four), while the second case study considered those of older elementary school students (grades six and seven). To ensure that various perspectives were heard and not misunderstood, students are quoted verbatim when possible, rather

than paraphrased. Dissenting voices are welcome and are not considered anomalies; rather, they are considered important pieces of the case study puzzles that must be attended to if accurate conclusions are to be drawn.

Asking students for their feedback is a common feature in many elementary school students, particularly in independent schools where reflection is paramount. It encourages them to think about their educational experiences and provides teachers with that much-needed student perspective about these experiences, allowing teachers to improve their practice. Formal studies that rely on elementary school students' feedback towards the arts are not unheard of, either; nor are they cutting-edge. Wallace Nolin's 1973 article, "Attitudinal Growth Patterns toward Elementary School Music Experiences" is such a study. In his examination of third through sixth grade students, Nolin reports important educational findings for elementary school music teachers because of such student feedback. For example, he notes that the elementary students in his study were "most enthusiastic about performance activities" (Nolin, 1973, p. 132). This feedback is directly from elementary school-aged students and is of double significance to my dissertation.

While some might question if students should be the ones to be consulted about their education, I would insist that they are the perfect individuals to provide feedback, for they are the participants. It is their education and their artistic experience that will shape who they are and determine their role in the larger school community. It is important that they are not only observed, but also given the chance to provide feedback about the educational experience itself. I strive to give students voice in my study, as I work to be what Taylor (1996) terms a "reflective practitioner" (p. 54). He explains that

there is much to be gained by listening to the voices of students, for as we do so, we “remove the stifling shackles of expertise in education” and, even more importantly, “imagine what is possible in education” (ibid). Perhaps this is why it is so ideal to have practicing teachers conduct research. While university’s academics are very knowledgeable about theory, it is school teachers who are perhaps best able to connect this theory to practice. They know their school and they know their students – and perhaps, most importantly, their students know them. This allows them to observe as they participate in the process as non-threatening insiders, which is very likely why the “teacher-as-researcher movement” has grown in popularity since the work of Stenhouse in the mid-1970s (Taylor, 1992, p. 61).

I am a practicing music teacher, who was a teacher-as-researcher in both of the case studies which are to follow. I have worked hard to make unbiased observations as students worked to prepare the elementary school musicals described in this dissertation. Similarly, as I have analyzed the students’ questionnaire responses, I have strived to be as neutral as possible. I recognize that there is an element of bias inherently there because of my close connection to my school and my students, but it is my belief that this is more of an asset than a liability. I want the best for my school and my students, and this is what I aim for as a reflective practitioner – both as teacher and researcher. That is why the case studies examined here hold great meaning as ‘snapshots’ of two specific musical theatre productions at an independent elementary school.

I will turn my attention to each of these case studies with time. But first, I shall begin with an examination of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

While very little has been written about the production of elementary school musicals, there are articles, studies, and dissertations that have been written about school musicals in general. While much of this writing focuses on secondary school productions, I believe that many of the issues raised in these articles are relevant for many school musicals. It is my intent to examine this literature, paying particular attention to those issues that are significant for productions involving younger students. These relate directly to the thesis of this dissertation, and also parallel the definitions given in the first chapter. While most of these connections should be clear to the reader, I have included the related definition in parentheses behind each issue for clarity. The issues to be examined are the following: the issue of arts integration (‘integrated performing arts’); the issue of entertainment (‘authentic arts experience’); the issue of aesthetic awareness and artistic skills growth (‘authentic arts experience’); the issue of personal growth (‘individual’); and the issue of community building (‘independent school community’). Relevant literature is included for each: both that which looks positively at musicals, and that which takes a more critical approach. I turn my attention now to the first of these issues, that of arts integration.

The Issue of Arts Integration

There is no denying that the musical is an integrated performing arts experience for students. By its very nature a musical includes music, drama, and movement. Many argue that this integration can be positive because of the opportunities that it offers students to be exposed to many different art forms, while others argue that it is less than

desirable because the breadth means that the depth of study in each individual art form is compromised and more time is needed. I shall first examine the positive claims, and then examine the criticisms of arts integration in school musicals.

Semerjian (1975) makes the claim that “integrated-creative arts should be at the core of the curriculum” (p. 5). He sees many benefits of this integration, including general benefits, such as laying the groundwork for “the ultimate means for personal expression” and more specific benefits, such as making music more accessible and “comprehensible” for all (p. 17). Semerjian defines “creative arts” as making art “for the sake of creating art or for personal expression”, not for staging a musical (p. 24). He notes that currently “the arts are used primarily as a performance medium rather than a medium for student creation” (pp. 2, 3). I believe these need not be mutually exclusive. It is my claim that the integrated nature of the musical, when approached thoughtfully, meets Semerjian’s criteria as it “provide[s] the vehicle for a person to experiment [artistically]... with little threat to others and with a probable gain of some self knowledge, feeling of identity, [and] expression of self” (p. 24).

Is the act of staging a school musical not an authentic, integrated artistic experience? Semerjian helps to answer this question when he describes the opportunities for problem solving that are possible through arts integration (pp. 223-234). If students are given opportunities to share their suggestions as dances are choreographed (p. 223), if correct vocabulary is used, particularly in context (p. 229), and if students are encouraged to reflect and self-assess throughout the artistic process (p. 234), it seems to suggest an integrated artistic experience.

Kefgan (1981) explains that “Musicals give students an opportunity to develop skills in all of the performing arts: acting, singing, dancing, instrumental music. They become, therefore, the one complete performance opportunity...” (p. 12). In this sense, there is much to be gained from integrating the arts. Students are not only exposed to many art forms, but are given the chance to master skills in each. The resulting performance is holistic, allowing students to see the connection that the arts share with each other.

Lee, music professor at Cornell College in Iowa, agrees with Kefgan when she describes how musicals, despite the time and effort they take to produce, are valuable learning experiences for students as they encourage musicality and theatrics, and offer opportunities for growth in both of these areas (1983, p. 41). She believes that there is no finer “synthesis” of the fine arts than in a musical production, as students “transcend themselves” by performing as singers, dancers, and actors, and adding their own creative flair to each performance (ibid). Lee shows balance in her writing by recognizing that for optimal educational benefit, the songs, dances, and speaking parts that are part of a musical must be worked on separately before combining them (p. 42). This addresses the concerns of those who would suggest that through integrating the arts, attention to each is somehow lost. Lee is clear that one can have the overall integrated arts experience of the school musical, while still giving each of the included arts the attention they deserve.

Atterbury’s article, “Research on the Teaching of Elementary General Music” (1992), surmises that elementary school music classrooms are active places of music-making (p. 597). Atterbury examines much of the relevant literature connected to this, including a study by Cheek (1979) that addresses this issue in its examination of fourth

grade students. The results indicate that those students who were participants in music activities that included some aspect of movement outperformed those students who were not given such opportunities. According to the author, this suggests that “instructional strategies that include movement are valuable, especially when done on a consistent basis” (p. 598). For the purpose of this study, it is important in that it deals with elementary school students and has findings that suggest value in the integration of music and movement, both of which are featured prominently in musical theatre productions.

Lewicki (2002) also looks at the value of arts integration in action. A middle school teacher, she describes the growing enthusiasm for her school’s extra-curricular musical program where more than half of the school’s 175 students auditioned for their latest musical; most impressively, this included a great variety of students, including developmentally-disabled individuals, athletes, and award winners (pp. 43, 44). Lewicki explains how each of these students had the chance to shine in their area of expertise because of the integrated nature of the production. For example, “the auditory learner with the magnificent voice” had the chance to sing a lead part, while “the shy artist” could participate by creating and painting sets (p. 44). The integrated nature of the musical encouraged the meeting of individual needs, the sharing of talents, and the inclusion of all. Is this not what we strive for as educators?

We must remember that there is another side to every issue, and this is exactly the point of Grote’s 1981 article “Another View”. Grote is very critical of musical theatre productions for students because he worries that as the arts are integrated, there is an instant stratification as some are seen as being more valued than others. In particular, he claims that students will see acting as secondary to both music and dance because “what

gets you parts is being in the choir or knowing how to tap dance, not knowing how to act” (p. 20). While this might be over-simplified and is Grote’s personal bias, it does raise the important point that integration does not guarantee equalization; what will be the focus of the musical experience for the students will most likely depend on the particular artistic background of the teacher(s) in charge of the production. If a teacher’s passion is music, then it is probable that the musical will be approached with music prominently at the forefront, whereas if theatre is her preferred discipline, then the acting will most likely be first addressed, with songs seen as being secondary. Ideally, we want each art form to support and strengthen the other.

Grote claims that if our aim is to educate students aesthetically, this is not possible through a vehicle that he describes as “bad theatre... tailored for stars and riddled with compromises” (p. 21). He does not adequately explain the specific compromises to which he is referring, but seems to be suggesting that the integrated nature of the musical somehow dilutes what is good about each of the performing arts were they to stand alone. As an example, he claims that while the lead actors in the musical may have the chance to explore characterization, the many who are part of the chorus will not (pp. 20, 21). This claim is questionable, for it could be argued that students with supporting roles in musicals still need to consider their persona, and arguably have just as much opportunity for considering characterization as do students with supporting roles in non-musical plays. Nevertheless, Grote has raised some important points.

Some of these concerns are echoed by Binnema (1996), who reminds us that Broadway musicals that have become such a part of so many schools’ music programs

“were not written for teenagers” (p. 6). She is particularly concerned with the educational value of these productions, specifically as this relates to the integrated nature of the musical. After grappling with the question of whether integrating music and drama together results in “a watered-down version of both”, she concludes that “from a purely theoretical standpoint there is no reason for a teacher to not do a musical with their students, if they so desire” (p. 46). Such a conclusion stems from a “theoretical standpoint”, for ultimately, Binnema, like Grote, speaks against arts integration. While she acknowledges that this integration can be traced back to the Greeks and has historical significance, she believes that “if we are truly striving for excellence in the arts...it is necessary to divide the arts into their various segments to allow for more in-depth study” (pp. 109, 110). This is why, in the end, she determines that musicals should not be done unless they are specifically required by the provincial or state curriculum standards. If they are to be done, she recommends that productions be carefully chosen to ensure that that they are not too easy or difficult for the students. This makes sense, but her other ‘solution’ that “talented secondary school students themselves write their own musicals, if they so desire” is somewhat ironic (p. 111). While the writing of a musical is inarguably a chance for students to work creatively, it actually adds one more piece to the integration of the arts. There is now less chance for “in-depth study” of specific art forms and individual works, for even more class time will now be required for this hands-on approach to be educationally meaningful.

The matter of time is an important one when one considers a musical, because it takes a lot of time to prepare for a large-scale, integrated production. Critics have argued that this comes at the cost of wasted learning time in the classroom. To this end, a local

high school music teacher and a British Columbia university professor teamed up to write the report *Producing Musical Theater for High School* (1990). As part of their study, Robinson and Poole surveyed several high school music teachers to find out their experiences with undertaking school musical productions. While almost all who responded to the questionnaire felt that the final weeks of rehearsals impacted their daily music program at some level, none felt that they had “a crippling effect”; this leads the writers to conclude that “any damage done is quite superficial and short lived” (p. 5). These short-term negative impacts contrast with the positive ones. For example, many of those surveyed indicated that participating in a school musical gave students the chance to develop their skills in the arts, often exposing them directly to new art forms (p. 9). In other words, the integrated nature of the musical not only introduced students who had never danced to this art form, but also gave them a chance to learn some steps. As they tried to dance, or act, or sing – or saw their cast mates doing so in the production - the students “widen[ed] their perception of the performing arts” (ibid). Arts integration, while perhaps taking more time than individual subject studies, played an important role in opening students’ minds to discover the many performing arts and encouraging them to see their value. For these reasons and others, Robinson and Poole conclude that the integrated performing arts vehicle that is the musical should be part of a school’s music program.

The Issue of Entertainment

Another important issue to consider when one looks at the staging of school musicals is that of entertainment. This is particularly important when looking at arts experiences that are ‘authentic’. Philosophers such as Westphal and Collingwood have

warned against the arts being used for entertainment purposes, echoing Kierkegaard's fear that entertainment might ultimately lead to "the spiritual destruction of humanity" (Senyshyn, 1999, pp. 86, 90). They believe that while art promotes individualism, entertainment promotes sameness (p. 82). Is this a concern with school musicals? Perhaps because of the element of performance, some see the musical as a publicity stunt more than an educational experience. They are particularly critical of the more popular nature of the musical art form itself, and argue that it is questionable if it is even an art. At the other extreme, others applaud the accessibility of this musical form and see the opportunity for performance as a positive experience, insisting that it helps to motivate the students.

Skaggs (1966) examines the pros and cons of staging a school musical by exploring the various reasons that teachers have for choosing, or not choosing, to produce school musicals. One of the specific criticisms the article addresses is the idea that a school musical is often "a public relations gimmick" (p. 149). This issue is raised by others, too (Barrows, 1965; Grote, 1986; Leist, 1958; Van Houten, 1999), who worry that in creating a show that caters to the public, schools are perhaps putting entertainment ahead of education. After examining both sides of the issue, however, Skaggs concludes that "Musical comedies are *all right* as school projects provided they aren't substitutes for *serious* musical education" (ibid, my emphasis). Her less-than-enthusiastic conclusion, and particularly her decision to contrast musicals with "serious music education", seems to be in line with much of the thought of the mid-1960s. Critics had concerns with the popular nature of the musical, and while many were willing to see it as

an addition to a formal program of study, very few were willing to recognize that it had educational merit in its own right.

In 1966, Mathis wrote an article against musicals entitled “The Show Must Go On?” In this piece, he calls the school musical “a very contagious disease”, recognizing its growing popularity, while reinforcing his concerns with what he perceives as a lack of educational value (p. 513). Mathis does acknowledge the excitement that school musicals can generate both in the student body and the community at large, but claims that this is not reason enough to justify their continued staging. He worries that “...youngsters emerge from this so-called ‘educational’ experience with little concept of artistic solo or choral singing, unable to read notes, blunted musical sensitivities, and stunted creative growth” (pp. 513, 514). He sees little opportunity for musical growth in the performance experience that is the school musical. If school musicals must happen, he argues, they should take place every third year at the most so that students have the opportunity to be exposed to other musical vehicles (p. 516).

Loy, Cleaveland, and Robertson respond to Mathis with their article “Yes, the Show Must Go On” (1966), acknowledging some of the issues that Mathis has raised, but offering suggestions as to how teachers may work around these. In response to his concern that vocal numbers may damage student voices, they counter: “It is not necessary to have the singers shout – try good diction and projection of the voice” (p. 519). They take exception to Mathis’s suggestion that “a scene from an opera” should be produced in place of a musical and claim that this would require the same time and energy commitment, “without the same results” because “a *scene* is not a show...” (p. 520, my emphasis). The authors recognize that Mathis does see value in arts integration and

suggest that he re-consider his unwavering position against musicals by looking to a well-chosen musical theatre selection. A fine musical, they argue, has the power to combine the performing arts “in such a way that the whole is more than any of the parts” (p. 521). This makes it a viable way to promote arts integration in the schools, which Mathis might recognize, were it not for his elitist attitude toward popular art.

Kislan (1995) anticipates those who, like Mathis, are critical of what they see as the musical’s ‘low art’ form. He counters by claiming this is actually a strength: “Musical theater is romantic popular theater, a theater of all the people” (Kislan, 1995, p. 183). He celebrates the fact that a musical is not an elitist, high art form, but an accessible art that can be appreciated by many. Gray (1988) adds to this, noting that just because a musical is accessible, this does not lessen its artistry, insisting that a musical theatre production is “a serious art form” and, by referring to Shakespeare, notes that “...one generation’s popular art may be another’s masterpiece” (p. 5). While many of Shakespeare’s contemporaries were critical of the artistic quality of his plays, they have stood the test of time. Who is to know what the future will have to say about the musicals of today?

Like Gray, Lee (1983) challenges those who look negatively at musicals as a genre without considering the artistic merit of each particular show. She acknowledges that some musicals are better than others, as might be expected with any artistic form. As we work as teachers to help our students grow in their aesthetic understanding, she suggests that we choose carefully because “many rock musicals do little to provide that opportunity” (p. 41). While this is in some ways as simplistic and closed approach as that of Mathis, Lee raises a valid point. As always, we must be prudent in selecting material

that is both accessible and educationally-sound, not shying away from that which is popular, but selecting the best of it, just as we would with any music.

Boland and Argentini offer their suggestions for facilitating positive amateur musical productions in their book *Musicals! Directing School and Community Theatre* (1997). While acknowledging that the musical is not a “lofty” or high art form, the authors remind us that it is still “a delightful – even informative –vehicle for entertainment” that can be “a challenging and rewarding experience for the cast as well” (p. xxiii). Perhaps this best sums up the issue of the musical as entertainment. A musical is not the highest of art forms, but that does not mean that is not a valuable art form. It is meant to entertain, to be certain, but as Boland and Argentini remind us, that does not mean that it cannot also be used to inform and educate. Entertainment and education need not be mutually exclusive. Like so many things in life, balance is key.

The Issue of Aesthetic Awareness and Artistic Skills Growth

Because this study looks at the question of authenticity in a musical production, one of the most important issues to be addressed is what role a musical might play in helping students to develop their aesthetic understandings, as well as their musical skills. I shall examine the literature which looks at musicals as sound educational devices and which suggests that musicals may actually do more harm than good.

While Deihl’s article, “Developing Musical Concepts through Performance” (1964), does not specifically address school musicals, it is nonetheless an important one to examine because so much of the time spent on school musicals is on preparing for the performance. The author notes that his results “tend to confirm the belief that, in general, students with considerable performance experience are decidedly lacking in

understanding of musical concepts...” (p. 61). These findings suggest that students must not be taught by rote as they prepare for performances, but must be given opportunities to learn throughout the process.

Diehl’s concerns are addressed by Barrows (1965) as he strongly advocates for the production of school musicals. Barrows contends that “under proper conditions the Broadway musical can serve as a valuable instrument for the development of musicality” (p. i). Specifically, he believes that through their participation in these productions, students are “challenged to exercise [their] own full powers” and reach their “personal potential” as they are empowered as musicians (p. 15). Unlike Leist, Barrows does not agree with the musical being used for public relations; rather, he believes that it must demonstrate “integrity in music education” (p. 29, based on Hartshorn, 1959). To him, this means putting the promotion of *musical* understanding, skills, and attitudes ahead of any non-musical benefits such as the promotion of teamwork (pp. 47, 51, 52). This is why he encourages music teachers to strive for “balance in the rehearsing and performing” of the school musical, so that ultimately both “musical growth and aesthetic perceptivity” will be the results (p. 39, based on Reimer, 1965). Addressing the concern that teachers might have students simply learn their musical numbers by rote, Barrows lists specific objectives that should be strived for as one works with students on the production of a musical. These included the development of “musical appreciation” (pp. 54, 55); “musical understanding” (p. 57, based on Leonhard and House, 1959); “musical knowledge” (p. 61); “musical skills”, both in performance and listening (p. 63); [positive] “musical attitudes”, such as open-mindedness (pp. 67-69); and “musical habits”, such as self-discipline (p. 70). Barrows promotes teachers evaluating not only the students

involved with school productions, but, just as importantly, the productions themselves (p. 201). He believes it is only through reflecting on the learning process that teachers can confirm whether or not particular musical productions have been successful in “the fostering of musical growth” (p. 207).

Burnau (1966) makes the claim that a musical theatre production can be culturally-significant both for student participants and audience members (p. 1). Like Barrows, he believes that the musical has the potential to be a positive educational experience for students that can help them grow in their appreciation for music, all while allowing them to meet the required music education learning outcomes (pp. 26, 29). The key is care in instruction and planning. His examination of a successful 1965 production of *My Fair Lady* at a large high school in Kansas reveals that students were exposed to many of the arts, including those that were not always their strengths (p. 127). This shows that musicals can provide opportunities for students to problem-solve and express their creativity in many of the performing arts, ultimately offering potentially meaningful learning experiences for all participants (Burnau, 1966, pp. 36-39, 45).

Burnau surveyed teachers at 86 American high schools of various sizes and found that fifty (58 per cent) produced musicals (pp. 85-91). Many positive contributions of the musical to both “the music program and the general educational program of the high school” were noted (ibid, p. 96). Feedback received from the teachers surveyed in the questionnaires includes claims that musicals were particularly effective in generating interest for the music department amongst male students, teaching cooperation and teamwork, integrating the performing arts into “a creative whole unit”, and preparing students to be effective listeners and viewers of opera (ibid, pp. 189, 190). Only one

teacher was not convinced about the educational value of the musical, but even she agreed that the annual school production played a role in “keep[ing] interest [in them school’s music program] high!” (ibid, p. 190). Burnau would argue, however, that while this heightened interest is a good start, it is not enough. He is clear throughout his thesis that the primary concern of the teachers(s) in charge of the musical production must be “educating students musically” (p. 130).

Tumbusch (1967) offers his suggestions for the production of a successful school musical, echoing the advice of many in his recommendation that great care be used when deciding on the musical that will be produced so that it is developmentally-appropriate for the students who will be involved (p. 34). He reminds his readers that because of their integrated nature and inclusion of the various performing arts, musicals are accessible to all students, as those who have specific strengths can shine and grow, while those who do not can develop “specialized skills” in the arts throughout the rehearsal process (p. 20).

Burnau (1968) claims that the school musical can play a role in helping students “develop concepts and critical thinking abilities”, particularly when the “discovery method of learning” is undertaken (p. 60). He recognizes the concerns of those such as Diehl who fear that in preparing for performances, teachers will teach their students by rote and not inquiry. To the contrary, by requiring them to be active learners, Burnau sees many possibilities to engage students’ creativity and thinking skills throughout the rehearsal process. Others, including White (1978), agree with Burnau and are convinced that student-centred teaching will encourage a “nurturing of [student] talent and

creativity”, as well as ensure a positive and healthy experience for all involved (White, 1978, p. 33).

Rackard (1980) also agrees with Burnau. He claims that “When musical theatre is properly organized and taught, it provides an excellent educational opportunity for all students of the school” (p. 1). The author explains how this can be, and has been, done, as he examines three case studies of high school musicals. Through it all, he maintains that it is of utmost importance that the director “...accept[s] a musical theatre production as a *union* of drama and music despite the shifting emphasis of one art form over the other at given intervals throughout the work” (p. 411, my emphasis). He warns that this is easier said than done, particularly when “tradition, expediency, or unrelated cleverness” get in the way, as can often be the case in school musicals due to existing expectations, busy-ness, and over-zealous individuals (ibid). He maintains that musicals are authentic artistic experiences: “As a creative art form, the aspects of the musical production lend themselves to a free play of individual tastes and judgments. As an art form, the quality of the production should be based on continuous and detailed attention to the many elements that go into a well-rounded and satisfying musical experience” (ibid, p. 415). The first of Rackard’s sentences claims “free play”, which immediately brings to mind Kant and aesthetics; the second emphasizes detail and well-roundedness, which suggests thorough, integrated arts education. Together, both support the authenticity of the artistic experience that is the school musical, at least when it is approached in a careful and meaningful manner.

Bircher (1981) explains how a musical production can be adjusted to best meet the educational needs of one’s students. She claims that if a teacher knows the needs of

her students and adjusts the musical process to address them, the result will be a positive and memorable educational experience (p. 9). Bircher correctly recognizes that this is particularly true because of who students are. They are young and many have “an energy, a freshness, a sparkle...” which pairs nicely with the high energy-nature of most musicals (p. 7). She notes how, developmentally, many students “do not have the maturity nor life experience” for intense characterization, making the more-stereotyped characters of most musical productions ideal for exploring this concept in a way that is manageable and accessible (ibid). This is not taking away from the artistic experience, as some would argue, but rather, enhancing it by ensuring that it meets the needs of student participants.

This student-centred approach is what Raplenovich describes in her 1996 article, “The Magical Place Called Opera”. She examines a case study of a very hands-on school musical production, where elementary school students in Ohio were able to write and produce their own opera. Through this learning experience, the children came to understand that “opera is not elitist, high brow art, but simply a method of spinning a tale” that “uses the natural, integrated aspects of [their lives] – drama, music, movement, and the visual arts” (p. 20). The results speak for themselves, with the students not only presenting a successful performance, but leaning through a positive working process that one student described as “better than Nintendo” (ibid).

Similarly, Orr and Reim (1981) explain how undertaking a school musical was a powerful aesthetic experience for their students, including those whom many thought would not rise to the challenge. This most likely means that the authors were successful in meeting their students’ needs. Quoting R. P. Warren, they claim that “...one of the

chief goals of all education should be ‘to move the young person to the moment of recognition of significance’”; this is what they believe happened through their school musical production, as they witnessed a positive change in behaviour and attitude towards the arts in many of their student participants (p. 6). This suggests growth in students’ aesthetic understanding as a result of their participation in the school production.

D. G. Grote (1981) disagrees when he says: “To suggest that we are teaching students to ‘appreciate’ art by doing such shows which are not vaguely artistic in any known understanding of the term is a betrayal of the goals which we profess [as arts educators]” (p. 21). While some may find glimmers of truth in his criticisms, his narrow definitions of ‘art’ and ‘artistic’, as well as his close-mindedness to alternatives to school plays, both ring of elitism.

Grote’s concerns do not seem to be supported by much of the literature. Bland’s article, “Original Opera in Middle School” (1993), is another example of a qualitative study whose results suggest that having students participate in musical productions does help students grow in their aesthetic understanding. For example, after participating in the “Creating Original Opera” program in New York City and Newark, New Jersey, Bland’s middle school students showed “a new appreciation and thirst for music and musical development in all forms” and were motivated to learn and experience more (pp. 29, 30). They also showed understanding of specific, higher level musical concepts, such as a recognition that communicating vocally with an audience requires an awareness of the lyrics and vocal “inflection” as one sings (ibid, p. 29). The students had come to

understand that effective, artful singing is not only about the words, but about how one presents those words.

Snider (1995) also examines the issue of aesthetic education and the musical. She believes that school musicals provide teachers with opportunities to teach what California's Board of Education includes as fundamental to arts education: "aesthetic perception, creative expression, arts heritage, and aesthetic valuing" (p.6). She surveyed teachers and directors from high schools, colleges, and universities that offered a specific course in musical theatre, and asked them to complete a questionnaire about their philosophy and classroom experiences. Unfortunately, her rate of feedback was less than 32 per cent - 38 out of 120 questionnaires returned (p. 25) - making the results somewhat less reliable. Nevertheless, Snider presents some interesting findings. She notes that "Most teachers made a concerted effort to expose their students to outside performances and guest speakers", which should benefit them not only as performers, but also as appreciators of the arts (ibid, p. 27). Similarly, most wanted to provide opportunities for their students to perform so that the children would take positive risks and see themselves as performers (ibid, pp. 29-32). She correctly advises that "Part of being a successful performer is being a successful observer", which means that ideally students have a chance to embrace "the whole" that is the musical, experiencing its nuances rather than just memorizing and reiterating lines (p. 55). By giving students opportunities to learn in context and then supporting this experiential learning through guided discussion and overt teaching of what they have experienced, students may grow in their "aesthetic perception"; this then has the potential to lead to "more mature self-expression, and the beginnings of the crucial critical perspective, or aesthetic valuing" (ibid, pp. 63, 64).

This is what we are striving for at any level of schooling as we attempt to offer our students authentic performing arts experiences.

While most of the literature supports the possibility that participating in a school musical can contribute positively to a student's appreciation for the performing arts, it is less clear if the same can be said about the development of musical skills and knowledge as a result of this participation. Michel, in a thesis entitled *Development of Musical Ability in Secondary School Students Through a Musical Theatre Program* (1982), examines this issue directly. Quoting proponents of relevant, hands-on arts education, such as Swanwick (1976), Michel proposes that through participation in a musical, each student "has the opportunity to experience music firsthand and to develop his musical skills" (p. 22). He then tests his thesis by studying two groups of students participating in high school musicals and comparing them to a group participating in "other musical activities", as well as a control group. While the musical theatre groups grew in their "ability to perceive and appreciate music" as indicated by the "Musical Quotient measure", Michel's results do not suggest that those students participating in the musical theatre program showed statistically greater musical ability growth than the other musical group (pp. 59-61). They did, however, show significant growth when compared with the control group. These results suggest that a school musical is not necessarily better or worse than other approaches to educating students musically, but is one possible way to offer students a performing arts education.

With regards to vocal education, however, great care must be taken. "High School Musicals: Accentuate the Musical and Eliminate the Voice Abuse" (by White, 1978), and "The Vocal Athlete" (by Weiss, 1978) tackle the issue of proper vocal care

that was raised in the 1970s by concerned educators. Weiss (1978) makes the claim that “the most popular medium by which young singers are exploited is the high school musical” (p. 32). Similarly, White (1978) warns that if teachers do not approach these productions carefully, musicals have the risk of seriously damaging student voices (p. 28). Because much of the music written for Broadway productions has a large vocal range, they believe it is too big for developing voices. Both insist that “vocal considerations” must always take top priority, with Weiss asserting that great care must be taken to select music that is not only motivating for students, but also developmentally appropriate (White, p. 28; Weiss, p. 33). They correctly maintain that students must be taught proper vocal technique, rather than just be given big, show-stopping numbers that they are expected to magically sing. White encourages teachers to take a proactive approach that includes careful casting and thoughtful staging, to ensure that student voices are not strained. For this same reason, he also recommends that teachers make modifications to the original score, including transposition, if necessary (pp. 28-30).

It can be assumed that Lee (1983) would not disagree with White’s recommendations of prudence. Because of the physical nature of the musical, which combines movement with singing, she believes that musicals can encourage good singing technique. Lee confirms that as one moves naturally, the voice is opened more fully, allowing for better vocal projection and, ideally, “a full, unforced resonance never before experienced” (p. 42). Similarly, Bobetsky (2005) asserts that working on a musical can actually help students in their growth as singers (p. 34). He does note, however, that this requires “overcom[ing] several significant challenges” such as “finding adequate rehearsal and preparation time and working with the vocal limitations of middle school

singers” (ibid). In particular, Bobetsky explains how important it is that musical parts be appropriate for developing voices, and in the case of many male students, changing voices. He explains that this may require the re-writing of certain vocal parts, echoing Lewicki’s call of meeting individual student needs when producing a musical (ibid, p. 36). Sharing a personal anecdote of meeting a former student who still had fond memories of her experience in the musical chorus fifteen years earlier, Bobetsky reaffirms that musicals, when taught with care, are socially-positive and musically-educational experiences for students (p. 40).

Gray also believes this, but goes further in her claim that the integrated-nature makes the musical a particularly valuable tool for helping students grow in their musical skills in many areas. In her 1988 dissertation, *The American Musical as an Educational Device*, she explains that there are many educational benefits to those who participate in student productions. With regard to specific skills that might be taught to student participants, she notes how rehearsal time can be spent helping students to understand their characters, to practice their enunciation and diction, to “mark up [their] script[s]”, to accurately and musically learn the various vocal selections, and to connect the dances to the overall concept of the show (Gray, 1988, pp. 39, 59-61). Each of these suggests that the focus is not merely on presenting a high-quality performance, but also about learning as one prepares, just as Barrows and Burnau advised. In this way, the students are growing as actors, musicians, and dancers – or, more directly, as true performing artists. Everything comes full circle as musical skill development, approached in such a thoughtful and authentic way, leads to greater aesthetic understanding as it “stimulate[s]

the imagination, arouse[s] curiosity, formulate[s] taste, increase[s] appreciation, and in general develop[s] emotional life to the enrichment of the whole personality” (p. 14).

Perhaps when one looks at the value of school musicals for students, the real issue is not so much whether or not they are educational, but *why* particular experiences with them are, while others are not. Van Houten considers this in her doctoral dissertation, *High School Musical Theatre and the Meaning Students Give to Their Involvement* (1999). After presenting some of the pros and cons of musical production in general, she declares that a school musical production has the *potential* to be a meaningful educational experience – depending on the strengths of a school’s performing art programs, and in particular, the leadership of the teachers in charge (p. 83, my emphasis).

To prove this point, Van Houten examines the experience of staging a musical at three different high schools in New York state, observing the rehearsal process at each and asking student participants for their reflections. The first case study, at a school in suburban New York City, resulted in student feelings of teamwork and “camaraderie”, yet Van Houten notes that due to lack of leadership by the music teacher/director, for many students the production of this musical “became an exercise in survival rather than an educational experience” (pp. 201, 211). Similarly, the students at a local rural school described “the enjoyment of performing, new (and renewed) friendships, and a feeling of accomplishment” (ibid, p. 285). Yet many were also “resentful” at seeing the “same students in lead roles”, as well as the monotony of rehearsals due to what some perceived as teacher “apathy” (ibid, p. 286). By contrast, the students at the third high school had more positive responses when describing the learning process. Their music teacher’s actions suggested that he wasn’t only concerned with the finished product, but also the

educational experience of the rehearsals as he “took the time to refine pitches and intonation, explain what the orchestral music would provide, and discuss the emotions of each piece. He demanded exactness and energy and did not waste time...” (ibid, p. 325). Based on student feedback and her own observations, Van Houten labeled this school’s music teacher “the quintessential educator and an extremely competent musical theatre coordinator” (p. 368). Overall, then, while students at all three schools seemed pleased by elements of their musical theatre experience, particularly the building of relationships and the opportunities for performance, the learning experiences for students – and the artistic quality of the show itself – varied greatly.

Building on the ideas of Lehman (1989), Van Houten surmises that “The degree of a student’s musical growth was a direct result of the competency of the musical director and the overall effectiveness of the high school’s vocal music program” (p. 404). Citing many proponents of experiential learning, including Dewey (1938, 1949) and Snider (1995), she further notes that students were most proud when “they were allowed to have a direct hand in the creative processes associated with mounting the musical”, particularly when they saw the results as “successful”; ironically, this required that they were first “given sufficient guidance and training in their roles to competently carry them out” (pp. 406, 407). This is what happened in the third case study in Van Houten’s research, which ultimately leads to her belief that “...*under the proper conditions*, adolescents do have the capability to present high quality renditions of certain Broadway shows. In the right setting, the presentation of a Broadway musical can be an affirming and educationally enriching activity for high school students” (p. 423, my emphasis). She cautions that this requires careful show selection, solid musical programs, and

director expertise, not only with regards to musical theatre productions, but more specifically with regards to musical theatre productions with young people (p. 429).

The Issue of Personal Growth

Personal growth is one of the reasons most often given for justifying school musicals. Many believe that students grow as individuals because of their involvement in productions that give them a chance to perform. It has been argued by many that students show growth in confidence because they come to realize just how capable they are through the act of performing.

One of the first to address this issue as it relates to young people was Simos. His book, *Social Growth Through Play Production* (1957), examines the role that participation in plays might have in leading to the growth of the participant both as an individual and as a member of a community. Building on the ideas of Slavson and his book *Creative Group Education* (1938), Simos suggests that for both realistic characterization and optimal character growth, "...an actor should not attempt to portray personality qualities on the stage which he does not possess as a person" (pp. 33, 115). In other words, if I am an enthusiastic person, it is best if I portray an enthusiastic character, for this will ensure that I correctly capture the essence of the character and also grow in my own character as I practice what I know.

In a case study, Simos examines a group of teenagers at a drug treatment facility who presented *Golden Boy*, a play by Clifford Odets, in the summer of 1954 (p. 75). One of the boys, Moody, who had a history of being a "trouble maker" did a terrific job in the play and was shown appreciation for his fine acting by both the audience and his peers. This resulted in him taking more responsibility for his own behaviour and also led to him

showing increased confidence (ibid, p. 101). To this end, Simos lists several personal-development benefits for those participating in theatre productions, including “...ego building, enrichment of living, mental hygiene, [and] emotional and social growth” (ibid, p. 133). If one assumes that Simos’s findings are transferable from plays to school musicals, this means that student participants might show growth in their self concept, mental health, and overall sense of being, as well an improved ability to look inward and act appropriately outward.

One year after Simos’s book, an article came out which directly addressed the question of school musicals; this was Leist’s aptly-titled piece “Broadway comes to High School” (1958). In this article, Leist claims that teachers have observed both “emotional and cultural growth” in students who participate in school musicals, including increased confidence and “a sense of belonging” (p. 22). He is not specific as to what is the reason for this growth, but is clear that it has been observed by musical participants. The “sense of belonging”, which connects to the issue of community-building and shall be addressed in more detail in the subsequent section, is perhaps one reason for the observed increase in confidence. Of course, we must remember that Leist’s comments are specifically in reference to high school-aged students.

Ross and Durgin’s book, *Junior Broadway: How to Produce Musicals with Children 9 to 13* (1983), addresses this issue with younger students. The authors claim that being a part of a school musical provides elementary school-aged youngsters with “a feeling of accomplishment that they never experienced before” (p. 153). They insist that the students grow in their confidence as a result of this experience, and have been impacted forever as people because of it. They write: “[The experience] lives with them

forever, and it influences everything they undertake in later life” (ibid). Like Leist, Ross and Durgin suggest that at least part of the reason for this personal growth comes about from a recognition that every member of the cast has had a part to contribute to the overall success of the show (p. 170). It could be argued that true teamwork actually contributes to enhancement not only of the team, but also of the individual.

Van Hoy’s graduate project (1978) connects with the work of Ross and Durgin. Her proposed elementary school arts program is based on using the various arts to support each other, while keeping the focus on each so as to preclude “superficiality” (Van Hoy, pp. 2, 4). To this end, she is very interested in providing a significant aesthetic experience for students. This is particularly important, she believes, because such an experience is “...inherently civilizing in the broadest sense” (ibid, p. 16). This connects to Dewey’s work on the importance of art as experience, of which a school musical is a fine example. As one truly experiences art first hand, one grows as a person. Van Hoy notes the significance of this by quoting Maslow, who explains that arts education “may be especially important not so much for turning out artists or art products, as for turning out better people” (ibid, pp. 26-27).

Bennett (1982) studied a control and treatment group of 10 and 11 year old students to observe the actual effects of participating in a student –centred performance experience (p. 7). Building on the ideas of Morgan (1975), Bennett suggests that a “musical drama” – which he calls “one of the most encompassing and integrative aesthetic experiences imaginable” – should provide the students with many opportunities for expression that will enhance their creativity, self-concept, and achievement (ibid, p. 50). His results confirm that, for his treatment group, this was the case. The group of

students who created, practiced, and performed the school musical made “significant gains in creativity over the control group”, whose creativity mean scores, incidentally, “had declined” (ibid, pp. 97, 98). He notes that the positive results for the treatment group could be the result of several factors, including the extra time spent working through a creative process and/or the extra attention provided by an educator while doing so (ibid, p. 101). Surprisingly, while the treatment group saw an improvement in self-concept, so did the control group (ibid, p. 103). This suggests that while participating in a musical theatre production may be one way to help improve children’s self confidence, it is not the only way.

Perrine (1989) also addresses head-on the question of whether or not participating in a school musical might result in personal growth for students. Her research builds on the work of others in its assertion that the ideal activity for a general music program of middle-school aged students is an integrated arts experience, specifically in the form of a musical theatre production. She examines many of the possible benefits of this sort of a program, including “personal aesthetic development”, “musical and dramatic growth”, and growing self esteem (Perrine,1989, pp. 2, 3). Upon administering a questionnaire to middle school musical participants and analyzing the results quantitatively, she discovered that, though statistically-insignificant, student attitudes towards music class had improved and “some creative thinking skills” had developed (ibid, p. 79). Surprisingly, however, she noted no change in students’ self concept (ibid, p. 74). This led her to conclude that more research is needed in “this almost neglected area” (ibid, p. 81). Until this occurs, Perrine insists that teachers choose their musicals carefully and,

like Binnema, cautions that student and parent enthusiasm are not in themselves proof of “the educational and emotional value of such a production” (ibid).

Oreck, Baum, and McCartney (1999), take a very different approach than Perrine, and reach different conclusions. Their work follows twenty-three young people in New York City as they participate in the “Young Talent Program” (Oreck et al, 1999, p. 78). The authors note how these inner-city students grew in “resilience, self-regulation, identity and the ability to experience flow” as they developed their “artistic talents” (ibid, p. 69). Perhaps most importantly, the arts provided these young people with a sense of purpose as “the time they spent in arts classes, rehearsal and performances appeared to give them a satisfaction unsurpassed by other pursuits and aspect of their lives” (ibid, pp. 69, 70). Unlike Leist, Oreck et al offer what they believe are reasons for these observed positive changes in the subjects of their study. They argue that the students grew in their sense of self because they came to see themselves as true performing artists. The authors explain how the students grew to believe in themselves because of the experience of performing; this resulted in greater self-confidence and a desire and ability to meet challenges (ibid, p. 76). Because this study deals with inner-city students, and mine deals with independent school students, it will be interesting to see whether or not parallels will be evident. Whatever the case, the issue of personal growth is important to consider as one questions how participating in a musical might affect an individual. Having considered this by looking inward, I now branch outward to look at the impact of a musical on community.

The Issue of Community Building

Many philosophers have written about the power of the performing arts to build community. (See, for example, Grote, 1986; Simos, 1957; and Thomas and North, 2005). Perhaps this is because, as Taylor (1992) claims, drama is “a shared ‘happening,’ which resonates with others who experienced, possessed, or entered that moment too” (p. 2). In this way, any dramatic experience, whether informal (‘drama’) or formal (‘theatre’), could be argued to contribute to community-building. In theatrical presentations, this is true both for performers and for those who share the experience as audience members.

In *Coming to our senses: The significance of the arts for American education*, a special project written by the The Arts, Education and Americans Panel, the importance of community in arts education is clearly acknowledged. The panel writes that “The arts always have been both a *cause* and *effect* of the development of community life...” (p. 185, my emphasis). In other words, the arts have a role to play in creating a cohesive community, and in coming about as a result of a strong community. The panel also claims that because of the “common roots and philosophy” shared by the arts, “a multi-arts experience is unquestionably richer and more valuable than exposure to a single discipline” for elementary school students (ibid, p. 142). This suggests, of course, that an integrated-arts experience is particularly conducive to facilitating this building of community for students.

Baisden (1995) describes a case study that shows this community-building in action. She writes of a partnership between two Philadelphia schools, one for ‘normal’ students and one for students with Cerebral Palsy, who worked together to produce a musical (Baisden, 1995, p. 13). As they shared the experience of participating in a

musical with positive themes of compassion and acceptance, the students grew closer together (ibid, p. 14). One of their teachers explained that these relationships were not forced but “develop[ed] on their own” as the rehearsals progressed and the students came to see each other as a team of performing artists (ibid, p. 15). Similar results were noted by Thomas and North (2005) ten years after Baisden’s study. Examining a middle school in Missouri that produces a musical each school year, they note the many benefits that befall participating students, including production experience and teamwork (Thomas and North, 2005, p. 43). The authors suggest that school musicals are a perfect way to involve parents in their children’s education and ultimately conclude that putting on a school musical with young adolescents both “supports the fine arts curriculum...and creates a sense of community inside and outside the school” (ibid, p. 44).

Schwen (1995) explains the similar results that were observed with a musical production at Valparaiso University’s Christ College. While his study deals with university-aged individuals, it is relevant because it examines a group of students working together to put on a musical. Schwen describes how the process not only “buil[t] and strengthen[ed] a sense of community”, but also “cultivate[d] ... virtues like trust, humility, courage, charity, civility, honesty, collegiality, and friendship” (p. 32). He explains that this is because, as Aristotle taught us, we become virtuous through practice; in this way, becoming virtuous can itself be seen as “a performing art” (ibid, p. 33). As students work together towards a common purpose, particularly one that requires such commitment to each other for success, they must trust and support each other. As they do so, the bonds between them are strengthened. This is how community is built.

Stubley explains this phenomenon in her 1993 article, “Musical Performance Play and Constructive Knowledge: Experiences of Self and Culture”. She writes that all “performances unfold in a subjectively created sphere which temporarily separates the performers and their activity from the ordinary world” and adds that this “...sphere establishes a ‘feeling of being apart together’” (Stubley, p. 95). She explains that this is particularly the case in ensemble performances, as each performer must “integrate his or her actions with those of the other group members to form a meaningful whole that represents the technical virtuosity and musical understanding of the group as a single unit or entity” (ibid, p. 96). This, as one would expect, results in “an interactive relationship”, both between performers and with audience members; Stubley calls this a “conversation” because of its back and forward nature (p. 97). As performers participate in a production such as a school musical, interacting with each other via this “conversation”, connections are made and bonds are formed. At the same time, because they want the production to be authentic, all participants bring their own unique contributions to their work. In this sense, as students work together, they are undertaking what Krader describes as “a process of discovering ‘difference and connection with the other’ simultaneously” (ibid). This means that each participant in a performance has the chance to grow as an individual while also contributing to the building of community.

I shall examine this, as well as the other issues raised in this chapter, in greater depth as we look at two specific case studies involving musical productions at an independent elementary school. The first of these involves younger elementary school students, whereas the second involves older students. In both cases, connections to the

literature just reviewed will be made. I invite the reader to join me as I turn my attention to the first of these case studies.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY #1 (*ONCE UPON A TALE*)

Setting the Stage

My first case study involves young elementary school students. The subjects are all children at Beachview Junior School (a pseudonym, to protect the participants' anonymity), a co-educational, non-religious, university preparatory independent school in metropolitan Vancouver, Canada. At Beachview, all students in kindergarten through grade four (the Primary Years Programme students) are part of a school musical every second year, alternating with the older students in grades five to seven (the Middle Years Programme students) who also present a musical production. The children in this study were involved with the school musical in the spring of 2008.

While the youngest students played a significant role in this production, they are not the focus of this study. In all cases, those students in kindergarten through grade three were involved exclusively in class numbers. That is, the students learned a group song (complete with choreography) during their music classes; these songs were then inserted into the appropriate spot of the musical, very much as would be the case with a school concert. In this way, all students were given exposure to the experience of being involved in a school musical without the need for additional, out-of-school rehearsals.

The grade four students, on the other hand, as leaders of the school's Primary Years Programme (PYP), were also the leaders in this production. They are the ones who had specific roles to play, and for this reason they are also the focus of this case study. These 43 students, 22 boys and 21 girls, were observed as they prepared for the musical by participating in rehearsals both in and out of class between the months of January and

March, 2008. They were then asked to complete a questionnaire (attached as Appendix A) in which they were able to provide open-ended feedback about the experience of being a part of a school musical. A summary chart that includes all 43 student responses is included in this dissertation as Appendix B. To protect the students' anonymity, pseudonyms are used instead of real names.

My Role

I wore many different hats as this production unfolded. First, I was a member of the musical production team with my colleagues, Donna and Jo-Ann. Secondly, I was the homeroom teacher and music teacher for 22 of the students involved in this musical. Finally, I was a researcher, who made it known to the students and their families that the musical they were a part of was an important part of my dissertation. In this way, I was what Merriam (1988) describes as “participant as observer” (pp. 92, 93). This was mostly positive, I believe, for the students were very comfortable with me and did not ‘make shy’ as they may have with a stranger observing them. Similarly, as is evident by their responses to the questionnaire (Appendix B), they were not afraid to be very open and candid in their written feedback about the musical experience. At the same time, I do recognize that because of my dual role as both musical co-director and researcher I come with a bias that could influence my interpretation of the experience, as well as the students' feedback. Merriam and others warn that this is a risk in a study such as this, but also notes that “These biases [are] inherent in all investigations... [for] an observer cannot help but affect and be affected by the setting...” (p. 103). To try and compensate for my bias, I did my best to develop a questionnaire that was very open-ended and non-leading: one which would allow me to examine the specific issues raised in chapter two

without directing the students' responses. It is also my hope that the inclusion of the verbatim student questionnaire responses, as well as my deliberate inclusion of both positive and negative aspects of this production, will alleviate any concerns of my critics.

The Choice of Musical

When one first hears about a school musical, the assumption is that a Broadway show is going to be produced. This is one possibility, as we will see from the second case study presented in chapter four, but it is certainly not always the case. Indeed, Burnau (1966) notes that while musicals may be well-known Broadway productions to which the school attains performance rights, they may also be “original musicals that are usually written by the ... music director or by a committee of students and teachers” (pp. 98-102). The latter of these choices made the most sense in this case for two reasons. First, the teaching staff in the year of this case study all agreed that the spring musical should have a story which focused on the attitudes that we were emphasizing as a school community. Second, as a musical team, we were aware of the importance of choosing music that was both musically rich and vocally appropriate for our students. Therefore, we decided to turn to a former colleague, Brenda, who is both a composer and music teacher.

Having worked with many young students before in various capacities, including as a district choral director, Brenda was well aware of the importance of writing music that was developmentally appropriate for children's voices. Having worked at Beachview, she also knew the school's philosophy, as well as many of the students and their families, and was therefore able to write the school a musical that was specifically tailored to the school's needs. Her original musical, entitled *Once Upon a Tale*, was a

fractured fairy tale that involved many traditional fairy tale characters and a variety of musical styles. Written in 2007, it premiered in March 2008 at Beachview Junior School.

The ‘Audition’ Process

In the autumn of 2007, the Beachview students were invited to attend another independent school’s musical production of *Les Miserables*. My colleagues Jo-Ann (the other grade four teacher) and Donna (the other music teacher) and I all agreed that we would use this as a starting point for our spring production. Prior to watching the other show, we talked with the grade four students about the connections between this production and our own upcoming musical in which they would be the leaders. We had a discussion about the various roles required to make a musical successful and then gave them a sheet called “Express Yourself!” (Appendix C). As the students viewed the show, we asked them to consider which of these roles, both on- and off-stage, were of most interest to them. We then asked them to indicate their preferences on the sheet so that we could consider these choices when deciding upon the cast and crew.

Because we were working with younger students, the musical team decided to follow the advice of Ross and Durgin (1983). These authors, both of whom have worked on many elementary school musical productions, explain that “the most important thing of all in casting is to make each child feel important” (p. 33). In fact, they believe that every student who auditions for a production should be given at least a small part. While we did not audition for this production because of the young age of the students and our intention of including everyone, our philosophy was similar to that of Ross and Durgin. It was our hope that we could honour the top choices of every student, while still placing each one in a role that we felt would be the best fit based on what we had observed in

their homerooms and music classes, as well as in extra curricular clubs such as drama and choir. In this way, we were hoping to make this experience one that met the needs of all participants.

As we examined the students' requests, it was interesting to note that while most chose roles that were as expected (for example, Shayleen, a student who is highly involved with dance outside of school picked dancing as her top choice), some did not. For example, Penny, an outgoing girl who "like[s] to act A LOT" (based on her questionnaire response), chose to be involved with the props. This will not be examined further in this dissertation, but serves as a possible topic for future research.

Once the roles were assigned, the students were told of their parts. Most seemed happy with their roles, although two boys who we had assigned as singers/dancers ("Forest Friends") requested to switch their parts. While at first the musical team was reluctant to do this because we wanted to have a good balance of both male and female dancers in the big dance number "Sunshine Vitamin", we eventually allowed these boys to switch roles with two girls who had smaller speaking roles ("Student Pigs") and were excited about the possibility of dancing with their friends. This decision, made in the interest of respecting individual choices while seemingly not impacting the production in any way, was noticed by one student (Evander) who felt that it was unfair. He commented on his questionnaire that one of his least favourite parts of the musical was "...how some people could change parts". Similarly, three other students (Lasha, Landon, and Douglas), while seemingly happy at the time of the casting announcement, later noted that they would have liked bigger parts and/or more lines. Both these cases indicate that, as Van Houten (1999) noted, school musicals can lead to feelings of

resentment because of certain roles and privileges given to others (p. 286). This is important to consider as one questions if, indeed, the musical can be beneficial for both the individual and the community. In striving to meet the needs of the individuals who were unhappy with their roles, for example, were these students put ahead of other individuals and the community as a whole?

The Rehearsals

Before the winter break, the students were given their scripts and a read-through was done. All cast and crew sat in a circle so that all students could hear the story. Songs were played on the piano and sung by the musical team so that the students would also have an idea of the melodies that they would be singing. The students were then encouraged to review their lines over the holidays and come back in the new year ready to start rehearsing in earnest.

Rehearsals in the new year were kept short, usually no more than 45 minutes, as per the advice of Ross and Durgin (1983, p. 23). As much as possible, these rehearsals took place during school time in music classes. This was ideal for full read-throughs or the blocking of larger scenes, where the cast could practice as a group while the props people gathered or made required materials and the programs/poster people worked independently. It was more difficult for individual scenes, however, and for this reason lunchtime rehearsals were deemed necessary. The students were asked to commit to up to two lunchtime rehearsals per six-day cycle, and all signed a contract, along with their parents, indicating that they would attend these posted rehearsals. As a student named Michelle explains it: “We did it at lunch and we worked on certain scenes each Day 2, 4, [and] sometimes 6.” For most of the students, these lunchtime rehearsals were the least

positive part of the musical experience. In fact, more than half (23 out of 43 students) indicated that missing their play time outside was what they least enjoyed about working on this musical. Comments such as Luke's were typical: "I didn't [like] to miss any of lunch or recess because those are our only time[s] in the day to go outside." Mitch expanded on this, indicating that he was not fond of rehearsals because of their interference with lunch time. As he explained it, very matter-of-factly: "I don't really like them [rehearsals] because I would rather be playing."

The rehearsals themselves were quite intense, with one student describing them as "Very long, [and] very strict" (Shawn, who, despite this description, indicated that he would like to participate in a musical again because he "...really liked it"). Another student noted the repetitive nature of the rehearsals, as scenes were rehearsed several times, with frequent stops for actor feedback. Bob disliked this, noting that we "Do 1 sene [sic] over and over until lunch is over". He also indicated that he would not like to participate in future musicals "because we do not get any fresh air", again suggesting his displeasure with the rehearsals that ran through lunch hour. While the musical team of teachers had hoped to dismiss the students from these lunchtime rehearsals somewhat early, and often started rehearsals with a promise that they would do so if the cast made it through that day's material, the reality was that the rehearsals almost always went right until the bell. This was particularly the case in the last few weeks of rehearsals, when the scenes being rehearsed often included many actors, several of whom stood around for much of the time as adjustments were made – and then acted silly as they became bored and tired.

Despite these lunchtime rehearsals, it was eventually necessary to find time for both grade four classes to rehearse together, as well as with the younger students whose class numbers needed to be placed within the script. This was necessary in part because the PYP musical was being rehearsed over a relatively short timeline, with only eight weeks from the first post-winter holiday rehearsal to the pre-Spring Break performances, but also because of the inclusion of so many students. For the least amount of disruption, these rehearsals usually took place while one grade four class was having their music class, meaning that the other class was having another subject, which they needed to miss in order to attend the rehearsal. Teachers were very flexible about this, but the students were less so. Groans were common in week seven when these extra rehearsals became a reality, especially when the class to be missed was a favourite one, such as physical education. Three students also commented that missing other classes was their least favourite part of the musical process. Olivia's comment that "I least enjoyed having to miss PE and never missing French" is representative of these concerns.

Perhaps because of so many extra rehearsals, there was one student (Theo) who was very critical of the rehearsal process, claiming that the rehearsals were "boring" and "inconsideret"[sic], presumably of his and others' time. His points are valid in the sense that there were definitely times when students were sitting around waiting for their scene to be run when they could have been outside playing; with more careful planning and some forethought, students who were on 'standby' could have been called in to rehearsal as needed. This would have answered many of the students' concerns about the lack of play time because of the lunchtime rehearsals. To ensure that an accurate portrait is painted, however, it is important to note that not only was Theo critical of the rehearsals,

he also saw little value in the entire musical process, calling the play “super kidish [sic]” and labeling the whole experience “a waste of time”. By contrast, Veronica, who like Theo was a Forest Friend, noted that the rehearsals these students both attended were “good” with “...no time wasted”. These differing opinions on what should be a very similar experience suggest that the question of whether or not the rehearsals were seen by the student participants as being useful was largely a matter of personal perspective.

The Issue of Arts Integration

Once Upon a Tale was a forty minute musical that included acting, singing, movement, and a variety of off-stage roles. All students in kindergarten through grade three were involved with learning their class song, as well as the finale song called “Caring, Sharing”. For each song, there was some level of choreography, although it was mostly hand movements and in-place steps, as opposed to full out dancing. These students were also each ‘characters’ in the sense that they had costumes and were asked to convey to the audience that they were little pigs, bears, or the like. Arguably, then, these students experienced a minimal level of arts integration. They did not learn any lines, but they did have the opportunity to take on a persona; they did not truly dance, but they did have the opportunity to integrate movement and music. Perhaps there are other venues that would have allowed for greater arts integration for these younger students, but, as mentioned previously, they are not the focus on this dissertation; instead, we turn our attention to the grade four students who are.

As explained, the grade four students were the leaders in this production, so they were the ones who truly experienced the full integration of the arts. All students had the chance to be involved with a variety of different aspects of musical production, including

acting, singing, dancing, set creation, props, and poster and program design. Perhaps most importantly, the variety of roles meant that all students had the chance to focus on areas that were of particular interest to them. This parallels what Lewicki (2002) found with regards to the integrated nature of the musical supporting the meeting of individual needs, as everybody's unique contributions were needed and appreciated.

According to the student questionnaire, thirty out of forty-three students recognized, without any prompting, that they participated in at least two different artistic aspects of this production. In reality, all students did at some level. This is because the choice was made to have those students who had off-stage responsibilities in the crew come on-stage and sing during both "Sunshine Vitamin" (the grade four dance number) and "Caring, Sharing" (the finale) so that they would have the opportunity to perform on stage during the final shows, as the younger students did. Those students who were cast as characters were given a role that included a combination of two or more of the following performing arts: acting (with or without lines), singing (either a group number, a duet, or a solo), and dancing. For example, each of the "Forest Friends", who were Little Red Riding Hood's sidekicks, was a specific animal which the student 'became' through costume and make-up; she then acted her part during the forest scene, and sang and danced to the song "Sunshine Vitamin".

It is interesting to note, however, that thirteen students did not recognize, without prompting, that they had taken part in more than one art form. This raises the question of how much one must actually do to feel that she has truly participated in that art. For example, all the Forest Friends essentially had the same sort of role, yet only two indicated that they had participated in "acting" as well as "singing" and "dancing". For

the others, perhaps being in role and having a line to say was not sufficient to have them see themselves as actually “acting”. Even more surprising, one student in this role (Jimmy) indicated that he only participated in “singing”, while another (Kassidy) indicated that she has exclusively taken part in “dancing” – when, in reality, their roles were exactly the same, and included elements of both of these art forms. This raises the question of student error on the questionnaire, perhaps due to rushing, as indicated by Jimmy’s claim to have participated as a singer exclusively, while at the same time saying “What I most enjoyed about the play was dancing”.

For most students, it was clear that this was an integrated performing arts experience, and that they recognized it as such. Nadeen’s claim that “I liked dancing, acting, and singing” suggests the enjoyment that many found in this integration. When asked if they would like to participate in future musicals, 39 out of the 43 students indicated that they would, with one saying maybe, and three saying no. When asked why, two of the positive answers in particular made direct connections to the integrated nature of the musical. Lasha indicated that she would like to participate again because she “...like[s] to sing and act”, while Kassidy recognized that as a cast member “...you get to act, sing, dance” (Kassidy). Perhaps the most telling answer to this question, however, was Kyle’s. He claimed that his favourite part of this production was singing, yet he would like to participate in future musicals because he enjoys acting. This suggests that the integrated nature of the musical may have given him the opportunity to appreciate a new art form that he had previously overlooked. Indeed, this accessibility is one of the benefits that writers such as Semerjian (1975, p. 17) refer to when examining arts integration in education. Kyle had not before been involved with our extracurricular

school choir, and yet here he was now listing singing as something he most enjoyed.

This is perhaps one of the benefits of an integrated approach to the arts: exposing students to art forms that they would otherwise not experience.

The Issue of Entertainment

Because this musical involved the youngest of the school's students, it was not a 'professional' production in the sense of many of the high school musicals written about in the previous chapter. The storyline kept the audience captivated, and the students' singing, dancing, and acting kept them entertained, but the show was certainly not meant to substitute for a night out at the movies. The musical did have a public-relations role to play in the sense that it was meant to give parents a chance to watch their children performing on stage. This was one of the motivating factors for the musical team's ultimate decision to have all students, including those who were involved with backstage and technical responsibilities, on stage for at least one number and the finale. As teachers, we knew that parents wanted to see their children on the stage - in addition to reading in the program that they were the ones responsible for the advertising posters.

Of course, the students also knew that the audience was there to see them, and in the case of many of the grade four students who had larger roles, this contributed to a feeling of stardom. Gregory was very honest with his reflection, which showed anything but stage fright: "I liked the feeling of being on stage and knowing that people are watching you". Similarly, Bob was clear that he liked being what he saw as a star of the show; he wrote: "I really enjoy[ed] being [the] center of attention".

Do comments such as Gregory's and Bob's suggest that Kierkegaard is correct in his fear that entertainment might ultimately lead to "the spiritual destruction of humanity"

(Senyshyn, 1999, pp. 86, 90)? Are students worried more about the opportunity to be in the spotlight than they are with the artistic experience itself? If so, does this suggest a lack of authenticity? While all three of these questions raise valid concerns, this production does not suggest that there is reason to worry. Yes, some students relished the chance to be front and centre, but that is not surprising developmentally. Nothing observed suggested that this was to the detriment of the production; no individual's actions resulted in a compromise to the artistic integrity of the musical in any way. Moreover, these student reflections certainly do not suggest a blanket 'sameness' that philosophers such as Westphal and Collingwood have warned against when the realms of art and entertainment collide; rather, they suggest a pride in standing out from the masses.

Interestingly, one student specifically raised the issue of entertainment on his own. When asked if he would like to watch future musical productions, Jiel answered that "I would because I like to be entertained". His comments indicate that he finds musicals to be entertaining, and that he sees a connection between musicals and entertainment. These feelings, however, may or may not have been influenced by his participation in *Once Upon a Tale*, for a follow-up conversation with this student revealed that he and his family have seen professional musicals, such as *The Lion King*. Further, his comments do not mean that Jiel values entertainment to the exclusion of artistry. For example, he also comments that he would like to be involved in future productions because "... it is kind of fun to sing and act". These words, as well as observed enthusiasm for the school production, suggest that Jiel finds pleasure in the arts, too; he values them as entities in themselves, not only because they are entertaining. As Boland and Argentini (1997) remind us, at least as far as musicals go, entertainment and

education can go hand in hand. It is to this area of artistic education that I now turn my attention.

The Issue of Aesthetic Awareness and Artistic Skills Growth

With regards to the arts, the musical team heeded the advice of Lee (1983), an advocate of the integrated musical production, who recognizes that for optimal educational benefit, the songs, dances, and speaking parts that are part of a musical must be worked on separately before combining them (p. 42). This makes sense, for each of the arts is then given the time and care it deserves before it is combined with its sibling art forms. For analysis, the three main performing arts in this musical will now be described.

Acting

So that they would have the chance to learn some acting techniques from a true expert, all grade four students were participants in a half-day acting workshop led by local actor Patti Allan. Allan, who has participated in several productions with the Arts Club Theatre Company and has experience teaching at all levels, from elementary school through postsecondary education, was selected because of her biography and credentials given in the *Art Starts* catalogue. Each grade four class and their homeroom teacher participated during school hours, with one class having their drama workshop before lunch, and the other, after lunch. Allan was friendly with the students, but also very firm in her approach and high in her expectations; her message was that acting requires focus and commitment. The students participated in a variety of exercises and drama games, each of which focused on different skills, including voice projection, expression, and

connecting with other actors. These activities were then followed-up over the course of the next several weeks by the teachers. Allan left the teachers with a variety of suggested activities, many of which were used both in class as part of the “How We Express Ourselves” unit, as well as during rehearsal time. The students now had a skill set to work from over the course of the rehearsals. Allan’s reputation as a ‘real actor’ gave her clout with the students, and her experience in the field gave her suggestions authority. These suggestions were used at various points throughout the rehearsals as members of the musical team would encourage students to enunciate their words with the reminder: “Remember what Patti said about speaking slowly...”

Many students who had speaking parts felt that they grew as actors as a result of the musical process. Hamish, who played one of the wolves, believed that he “...learned how to be a [sic] actor” as a result of being a part of this school musical. This is not surprising, for he and Shawn, the other wolf, were involved in many rehearsals with just the two of them, working on their scene with a focus on acting skills such as vocal projection. Shawn refers to this in his questionnaire response, noting that he learned “To project [his] voice very loud and slow.”

Other students from other scenes also felt that they “...learned much about acting” (Gwen). Like Shawn, Jane and Cindy felt that they learned how to project their voices, among other skills. Henrick, a natural performer who played the role of Councillor Tortoise, also commented on this, explaining: “I learned how to make my voice loud and clear. I also learned not to speak so fast.” These student comments suggest that skills such as projection were emphasized and learned as a result of their participation in the musical.

Gwen, who played the role of Mama Bear, explains another important acting skill that she learned through the rehearsal process. She contends that she learned “how to express [her]self on stage...”, a finding consistent with Snider’s thesis (1995) which recognized the opportunities for “creative expression” when guiding students through school musical productions (p. 6) This is understandable, for the students were constantly guided to think about their characters. This characterization was made more accessible by the fact that the grade four students were generally very familiar with the characters in *Once Upon a Tale* because of their exposure to these fairytales as younger children. They were taught to speak as though they were the characters that they were portraying, using enthusiasm and expression, and were also coached in the importance of nonverbal cues, such as body stance. Cindy, who portrayed Goldilocks in the production, recognized this, noting that she learned “...to express [her] face more.” The finished musical production demonstrated that Cindy was not alone, and that many students were able to use facial expression to help express the nature of their characters.

Dancing

The class numbers combined music and movement. It was the grade four student leaders who had the opportunity to dance the show’s big dance number: “Sunshine Vitamin”. This dance involved twelve students, all of whom were invited not only to learn the dance, but also to help with its choreography. The idea here was that by encouraging students not only to learn a dance, but also to contribute to its creation, this experience would be an opportunity for creativity, skill growth, and true artistic understanding.

At the dance rehearsals, the dozen students stood in a circle with me, the musical team dance leader. Rehearsals began with the students singing through the entire song and dancing the parts were had already learned as a warm-up and review. As Ross and Durgin (1983) suggest, the dance was broken into chunks, so that one part could be worked on at a particular time for optimal success (p. 77). The students would sing that part (usually a one to two bar section) so that the melody and words could be considered. They were then asked for their suggestions of possible dance moves that would fit with the music. At first, some of the students were shy, but the more that we did this, the more that they were willing to offer their ideas. The repeated ideas for choreography that came up at future rehearsals suggested that this was most likely due not only to growing student confidence, but also to a growing bank of movements to draw from. After all who had suggestions had shared their ideas, the students then came to consensus on what moves they wanted for that part of the piece. I then recorded these steps as the ‘official choreography’ so that we would have a record to work from at subsequent rehearsals.

Surprisingly (to me, at least), no student specifically listed these dance rehearsals as their favourite part of the musical, suggesting, perhaps that their very nature made them too long and repetitive to be ‘fun’. Similarly, no one indicated that they had learned what goes into choreographing a dance. Two students (Kim and Shayleen), however, did specify that they had learned “new dance moves”. This is positive and suggests that the process had at least some merit. It also answers the call of critics who warn that the musical process is only about rote learning. By contrast, this experience ensured that the students learned as they memorized their moves. Nevertheless, the dance experience could have been improved had there been time for the students to learn another dance, or

at least learn a collection of dance moves, before they began their choreography so that they would have had a ‘tool kit’ of ideas to work from.

Music

Most of the singing for this production was addressed in music class, for all but three of the songs were class numbers. As music teachers, Donna and I were conscious of the importance of not simply teaching the songs by rote, although certainly listening and repeating back melodic phrases and lyrics was employed. This was done with an awareness of the young age of the students. Indeed, some music educators believe that young children “...learn songs best through [the] imitative process called rote learning” because they can “...focus their attention on the beauty of the sound being imitated, the production of correct interval relationships, the expressive interpretation of the music, and the clear enunciation of vowels and consonants” (Rozmajzl and Boyer-Alexander, 2000, p. 211). In this sense, it could be argued that some of the objectives Barrows (1965) lists, including musical skills and music appreciation, were addressed through the repeating back that was employed for the first few weeks these songs were learned. At the same time, related discussion about the lyrics being sung, musical styles employed, and reasons for such expressive motifs as dynamics ensured that musical knowledge and understanding were also addressed. “Musical habits”, such as self-discipline were also an important part of music class rehearsals as it was expected that students would come to each class ready to focus and learn (Barrows, 1965, p. 70).

This was also the case for the three students who had solos and duets. These students were carefully selected for their roles not only because they were known to be confident, enthusiastic singers, but also because they were known to be hard workers who

would learn their parts, respond to teacher feedback, and show discipline and commitment. All three attended lunch hour rehearsals. Olivia, who played the role of Little Red Riding Hood and had a solo in the song “Sunshine Vitamin”, would often be required to stay longer in rehearsals so that her song could be worked on. Having been a member of a community children’s choir outside of school time, she was very willing to meet whenever necessary. Olivia’s mom was also very committed to working with her and ensuring that she practiced her part at home. While Olivia did not indicate that she learned anything about singing, one of her favourite parts about being involved with this production was “having a solo”. This indicates that the experience of singing a solo in this musical was both positive and, when one considers Olivia’s solo at the performances, which showed definite growth in projection, also educational.

Vocal projection was emphasized for all students, as was diction. In both cases, this was so that no part of the tale would be lost on audience members, for in this production, as in most musicals, much of the story was told through song. This was particularly the case with the show’s only duet, a comedic song that featured the show’s detective and her trusty sidekick, Bob. These two roles were played by Nadia and Ronny, both of whom indicated that they learned something about singing as a result of their musical experience. Ronny claimed that he learned how to “...sing better”, while Nadia learned about the challenges of singing with another. Because their song employed a back-and-forward verse, followed by a unison chorus, much practice time devoted to timing and balance was required. Like Olivia, these two students attended many extra rehearsals and yet seemed to enjoy the extra practice time. They would often stay after class to ask if they could work on their duet, perhaps because they wanted to

polish their number, but most likely because they found the rehearsals, as Nadia put it, “really fun”.

Interestingly, only one additional student indicated that she had learned something about singing as a result of this musical production. One of the mouse narrators, Michelle, claimed that not only had she improved her acting, but that she had also learned “... how to... sing with expression”. Michelle’s comments are positive, for they suggest new musical understanding on her part; however, does the fact that no other students indicated that they had learned something about singing suggest that, for them, no musical learning took place? This is, after all, a common concern of those who disapprove of musicals as vehicles for arts education.

It has already been mentioned that this musical included songs with a variety of musical styles, so theoretically, there was an opportunity for students to learn about different musical genres. This was not specifically addressed in the questionnaire; it is beyond the scope of this dissertation in that it involves all the students from kindergarten through grade four. What can be confirmed is that all students had the opportunity to learn two new songs: their class number and the grand finale, “Caring, Sharing”. Each of these songs was within the range of most young singers (middle C to high C), pro-actively addressing the concerns of White (1978) and Weiss (1978), both of whom worry about vocal strain in show-stopping Broadway numbers. All students appeared comfortable with the range of Brenda’s songs, and sang them with no apparent strain either during rehearsals or the actual shows. The fact that no student indicated that singing was their “least favourite” part of the musical experience might be seen as positive, particularly because these songs were practiced over many music classes.

It is important to recognize that the three students who were given the extra attention because of their solos and duets were the ones who most clearly indicated their enjoyment of, and learning through, the music part of this musical. Such a response suggests that, ideally, more students might have been given individual or smaller ensemble singing pieces, so that they might also have had the chance for that one-on-one vocal attention. Personal attention, where specific vocal technique can be individually practiced and observed, would most likely result in greater learning of musical skills.

Arts Appreciation and Understanding

When asked if he would you like to participate in future musicals, Murray responded positively, explaining that "...it [the experience of being in a musical] is fun and ... it can help me learn more about the arts". His comment echoes what Burnau (1966) believes: when approached with careful instruction and planning, the musical process can play a role in helping students to grow in their appreciation of the performing arts (pp. 26, 29).

Perhaps the biggest indicator of arts appreciation from the perspective of the group is that Murray was not alone in his response. Of the 43 grade four students who completed the questionnaire, 39 students indicated that they would like to take part in future productions (while one said that it depends on circumstances and three responded "no"). 36 noted that they would like to watch future musicals (along with three students who said "maybe", and four who answered "no"). These results suggest that the grade four students who completed the questionnaire valued their experience of working on the musical and/or value the arts product that is the musical. There is no way of knowing for sure if this is a cause/effect relationship (i.e. whether it is *because* of being in the musical

that the students now value the musical more than they did before), but it most certainly shows a communal appreciation for this art form that is much higher than one would expect from a random selection of grade four students.

Grote (1981), who finds little artistic value in musicals, would likely argue that this does not suggest growth of arts appreciation. He would probably counter that there is little to celebrate in students wanting to watch other productions of an art form that he sees as being somehow less artistic than many others. I disagree, however, citing the words of Ross and Durgin (1983). They explain how being in a school musical production helps to equip students with the “tools” that they need to not only be performers, but also active “drama critics” (p. 171). While relatively few students will grow up to be professional performing artists, many of them will hopefully grow up to be theatre-goers – for musicals to be sure, and perhaps even for other dramatic productions, dance performances, and/or concerts. Having participated in a school production, their interest has now been peaked; they know what they might look for, and why they might attend. In fact, as the following responses indicate, several students seem to understand that attending an integrated performing arts presentation such as a musical can be not only enjoyable (and “entertaining”, to quote that controversial word from the previous section), but also educational. When asked the question “Would you like to watch future musicals?”, Ronny explained that he would because “I want to learn from them”. Similarly, Mandeep responded positively, noting that “I would like to because then I could learn and improve on my acting”, sentiments also echoed by Jon.

Student interest in watching musicals to learn from them indicates an appreciation of the value of this particular art form, at minimum. When this is combined with

comments about what has already been learned from the experience, it appears that the students have grown in their artistic appreciation. While many students indicated specific skills that they had learned from the musical process, others grew in their understanding. Evander, for example, learned “...that [when working on a musical] you have to practice and keep up”. Similarly, Kassidy learned that performers “...have to work really hard to put on a great show”, suggesting a recognition that being a part of a musical requires commitment, time, and focus. These are important understandings for young performers, to be certain, but they are also of significance for appreciators of the arts. Both Evander’s and Kassidy’s comments suggest a new understanding of the practice time that goes into preparing a musical, which will hopefully transfer to viewing future performing arts productions with more awareness of what has gone into the final show.

Not all students grew in their aesthetic understanding. I have already presented some of Theo’s critical comments, and he continues these with his claim that he has learned “That every musical Beachview has had is really boring”. Similarly, Jimmy is very clear in stating that he learned nothing from this experience: “I can’t think of anything I learned”. These student comments suggest that this musical did not meet the needs of every single student. This is unfortunate, to be sure, and it is certainly something that needs to be addressed – but is it really any different from any educational experience that caters to a broad cross-section of students, as one finds in an elementary school classroom? Whatever the arts activity, there will always be a few students who don’t get as much out of it as we as educators would hope for. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the reasons why this is the case, but it is the case. It does not

mean that the process of producing an elementary school musical is not a valuable one, but it does mean that not all students feel that they have benefited from this experience.

Most, however, have. Nadeen, for example, learned that she “...really like[s] being in plays”, which most certainly shows a new recognition for the enjoyment that comes from being a part of a performing arts experience such as a school musical.

Similarly, Zach, a programs and poster student who missed the actual performances due to illness, learned about this aesthetic pleasure. He writes: “I learnt that being a part of the play is actioully [sic] really fun”. This is particularly telling when we further look into Zach’s questionnaire response and note that he also called the rehearsals “fun” and used ‘creative’ words like “wondering” and “ideas” to describe the process in which he was involved. Zach is a student with academic and behavioural challenges, who in the past has shown little interest in the performing arts. Consequently, his recognition of the value of this experience is so positive: it is indicative that the musical process is not only beneficial for those who already value the arts, but also for those who perhaps do not.

Zach’s comments echo the finding of teachers Orr and Reim (1981), who explain how undertaking a school musical was a powerful aesthetic experience for their students, including those whom many thought would not rise to the challenge. Zach did rise to the challenge, and grew in his aesthetic appreciation because of his role in *Once Upon a Tale*. He also grew as a person, as did many of his classmates – and it is to this area of personal growth that I now turn my attention.

The Issue of Personal Growth

It was very interesting to observe the students throughout the rehearsal process and see them grow as young performers. As rehearsals progressed, their body language

and vocal projection showed a confidence that wasn't there from the beginning. Students moved in character, and lines were said with greater volume. This increased confidence was evident on stage, to be certain, suggesting that the rehearsals were paying off - but it also moved beyond the stage to other areas in the students' daily lives. Students who rarely contributed to class discussions now showed more willingness to participate, and even the shyest of the shy would make eye contact when spoken to in the hallways.

While this group of students included many students who enjoyed the spotlight even before the musical process began, there were others for whom this was not the case. One of these very shy students was Mandeep, a grade four student who spoke very softly when sharing ideas in class discussions. Although he was well-read and knowledgeable about many issues, this student did not like being the centre of attention. He was excited to take part in the musical, however, and, as the character Baby Bear, "most enjoyed being a humorous actor". Mandeep most definitely showed personal growth over the course of the musical production. In early rehearsals, it was very hard to hear him on stage, but by the later rehearsals, he was not only projecting his lines more effectively, but actually acting. He learned that "...it takes a lot of courage to stand up and perform at [sic] a lot of people", but he did it. In this sense, his comments imply that Mandeep has also learned that *he* has that courage to perform, which surely has improved his self-concept.

Another student, who was also nervous about performing, not only learned that he could do it, but actually indicated that this was his favourite part of the musical process. Douglas, who played one of the Forest Friends and was therefore part of the big dance sequence, writes: "I most enjoyed being on stage and feeling confident..." This very

strongly suggests the “emotional and cultural growth” observed by Leist (1958) of students who participated in school musicals. In particular, this author notes that increased confidence, such as that described by Douglas, is often a by-product of such participation (p. 22). Most indicative of this new confidence is, perhaps, Douglas’s enthusiasm for a bigger role in a future production; this is a major shift in position from a boy who had showed no interest in a main part in this musical.

This was not true for every student. Kristine, for example, chose to be a props person for this production because she does not like being in the spotlight. (As she described it: “...I’m a little shy”.) Because she was required to be a part of the ensemble for the two class numbers, though, she actually was still a performer. This could have led to feelings of accomplishment, as we witnessed from Douglas, but in Kristine’s case it did not. To the contrary, it meant that the singing was her least favourite part of the musical experience. Fortunately, Kristine is willing to participate in future musicals, suggesting that the experience was not too traumatic for her – but she does reiterate that she does not want to be onstage by qualifying her response with the following: “I would if I don’t really have to act”. Does this suggest lack of confidence, or does it possibly indicate assertiveness in stating what she is and is not willing to do? It could be either, for arguably, Kristine is being an individual by making her position clear. Perhaps most impressively, she indicates that she would like to watch other musicals “...because [she] find[s] them easy to learn from...” – and this learning helps her to “... feel more confident”. In this way, Kristine has shown individual growth. She sees the value in watching and learning from other productions, all with the goal in mind of enhancing her self-concept through improved confidence.

What about those students who were already seemingly confident? Did they exhibit personal growth, too? If we look at the example of Pam, an outgoing student who “...enjoyed being one of the main characters” in this musical, the answer is a definite “Yes”. While Pam actually had relatively few lines as the school teacher, Ms. Higgly Piggly, the fact that she had a named-character role gave her a sense of pride. She noted that she had “... never been in a musical...” and so found this new experience to be “exciting”. In fact, Pam enjoyed the process so much that when asked if she would like to be in a musical again, she replied positively and noted that “I love being in musicals”. When one considers the fact that this production has been her only experience in a musical thus far, her sweeping, generalized response strongly suggests that this positive experience has contributed to her confidence in her ability as an actor. Not surprisingly, based on her questionnaire responses, Pam auditioned for a local, after-school children’s theatre company; she was accepted and is currently preparing for an upcoming musical with that group.

A similar result to Pam’s was evident with Steven. As one of the little pigs in the classroom scene, Steven had only a couple of lines and was never ‘in the spotlight’. And yet, he had very positive things to say about his experience. Steven writes: “I liked it [being a part of the musical] because it felt [sic] good up there and it makes me feel good”. He also notes that he would like to do another musical because “... I love being up there”. This reiteration of the upbeat feelings that Steven has when he is on stage suggests that he truly enjoys the experience; further, one could deduce from this that he sees himself as a capable performing artist. This is most impressive when one knows that prior to this experience, Steven put all of his energy into hockey. He is now an active

member of the extra-curricular choir, on his own initiative, and is a very focused and keen student during music classes – particularly when the focus is on singing. This suggests that he has certainly grown as an individual.

Looking back to the definitions from the first chapter of this dissertation, I remind the reader that an *individual* is a person who celebrates who (s)he is—who has the courage to stand out from the crowd, both on and off stage. True individuals, as Kierkegaard wrote, are leaders who don't conform with “the masses” (Senyshyn, 1999, pp. 80-83). This is a description of Steven. He might still care what his fellow hockey players think of his new love for being on stage in a musical, but he doesn't let this stop him. His confidence is now such that he is very willing to actively participate as a performing artist, even if his hockey teammates do not; his self concept is strong enough that he can be himself, rather than conforming.

What is responsible for this increased sense of confidence, of individualism? Ross and Durgin (1983) believe that it is a result of being a part of something as special and unique as a school musical, which gives students “a feeling of accomplishment that they never experienced before” (p. 153). Certainly, the comments of both Pam and Steven would suggest that this was the case for them with *Once Upon a Tale*. While clearly not every participant experienced this once-in-a-lifetime “feeling of accomplishment”, this does not matter: it is enough that they experienced a sense of accomplishment, period. As Paul describes it: “are [sic] work payed off [sic] and it was fun and everyone liked it”. He recognizes that the students worked hard and contributed to a very successful show; this has shown them what they can achieve when they put their best effort forth. Moreover, because the musical production was well-received by the

audience (“everyone liked it”), the students have been ‘validated’ as successes in their own right. For some, this will mean that they now see themselves as actors, or dancers, or singers; for others, it will mean that they now see themselves as *individuals*.

The Issue of Community Building

Referring back to the first chapter, my definition of an *independent school community* built on the ideas of Noddings (1984) and the importance of caring. Yes, the independent school community exists at some level by default by the very nature of the shared geographic space (the Junior School building at Beachview, for example), but the building of this community, the strengthening of bonds between members, takes respect, understanding, and caring.

In chapter two, I presented many who believe that participating in a school musical contributes to a growing sense of community. Ross and Durgin (1983), for example, insist that as students participate in the musical process, “supporting each other by doing their part to contribute to the overall success of the show”, bonds are built (p. 170). Similarly, Thomas and North (2005) list “teamwork” amongst “the many benefits” of elementary school musical productions, one of which includes the building of community (pp. 43, 44).

Several of the grade four students who participated in the Beachview PYP musical recognized the importance of teamwork when putting together a musical. Gregory, for example, learned that “...to make this big thing you need teamwork...” Rochelle elaborated on this explanation, noting that she learned “that you have to cooperate”. Everyone makes their own contributions, and these individual parts all fit together to create the show. Penny echoed these sentiments, as she learned that

“...teamwork can let you go a long way”. In other words, the more that everyone does her part and supports others in doing their parts, the farther that the team can go – and the better the overall production. As Penny explains it: “...cooperating with others make [sic] things a lot better”.

While these are important understandings, teachers cannot assume that students will innately know how to work cooperatively. Like anything, it takes practice, and these opportunities for practice were provided by this musical experience. Landon recognized this, explaining that he had learned “how to work with others”. From working with another student on drama mirroring activities, where each had the opportunity to be the leader and the follower, to rehearsing scenes with his cast mates, this was the case. In particular, as Wig the Troll, Landon learned how to interact believably with Olivia, who played the role of Little Red Riding Hood. By practicing jumping out at the appropriate time to ‘scare’ Little Red, and coordinating the timing of his lines with hers, Landon very much learned “how to work with others”.

Lindley recognized that this level of cooperation required effort and commitment. She learned that one of the ways in which the students could support each other was by “... help[ing] each other with lines and practising”. Running lines with a peer was modeled for the students, and they were encouraged to work with a classmate when they were sitting around waiting for their turn on stage at rehearsals. This was recognized by Douglas, who wrote the following: “I learned that we can help each other out when were [sic] either on stage or off stage”.

The ‘helping’ that Douglas describes took many forms as the production progressed, including those directly connected to rehearsing, such as the above

descriptions by Landon and Lindley. It also included supporting each other in less formal ways, such as watching rehearsals and encouraging everyone to do their best. For some of the students, this was their favourite part of the musical experience. Zach, for example, whom we have already read about, most enjoyed “getting to watch [his] friends do there [sic] part...” Similarly, Fontaine “...most enjoyed listening to Detective Wiselock and Bob do their duo...” Comments such as these suggest true appreciation for the contributions of others, and are indicative that there is at least some level of increased understanding that everyone has a part to play in putting on a musical, and each part is to be valued. Andrea, arguably, says it best: “I learned that everybody [in the production] has a really [sic] great talent”. Her selfless comment indicates that Andrea appreciates her peers and what they have contributed to the musical; this recognition and valuing suggest a level of caring which indicates a building of community amongst the cast.

Not all students necessarily enjoyed watching their peers perform. While many did, some students tired of watching their cast mates. Catherine, for example, least liked “listening to the others over and over again”. At first glance, it may appear that she had a very minimal onstage role and was exhibiting some resentment to those in the cast who had larger roles, much as Van Houten (1999) noted in her research (p. 286). It is important to note that Catherine was a Forest Friend, meaning that she played a significant role in the forest scene and the big dance number. This is not a ‘starring role’, but it is comparable to a role in the chorus in a Broadway production. Perhaps, then, Catherine did not enjoy watching those scenes with the main characters being rehearsed ‘over and over again’ because she found it less fun than being on stage. Indeed, this is supported by the fact that she most enjoyed “performing”. At the same time, we cannot

surmise that all students with smaller roles felt this way, for Andrea and Fontaine, whose comments we read in the preceding paragraphs, were also Forest Friends; similarly, cast mate-encouraging Zach was a poster and program designer, which means that his time on stage was far less than that of Catherine. This suggests that it is not so much a matter of role size, but rather, personal desire to be the one performing, that is the biggest factor regarding a willingness to watch one's peers rehearse. Whatever the case, Catherine's comments are important to consider when examining whether or not the building of community was evident within the cast of *Once Upon a Tale*. Because her comment is the only one of its kind in the questionnaire feedback, it suggests that it is safe to say that, overall, a level of appreciation, caring, and, hence, community-building amongst cast members did occur.

The question then is: Did this building of community extend beyond the cast? Finn is very practical in his examination of this issue, noting that "... if you perform in front of a bigger audience, you'll build a bigger community of arts appreciation". In reality, this show was performed twice for the Beachview School community: once as a matinee, and once as an evening production. In both cases, the Junior School Great Hall was full of over two hundred proud parents and grandparents. Grandparents were especially prevalent at the afternoon performance of the show, as it was deliberately coordinated with Grandparents' Day, where the students' grandmas and grandpas are welcomed to the school with a special tea. The matinee of the primary musical has traditionally been a part of Grandparents' Day at Beachview because it is recognized that grandparents love to see their grandchildren perform. Evander's comment suggests that this feeling is returned by the grandchildren. He writes: "I enjoyed my granparents [sic]

coming and watching me...” In this way, there is a mutual benefit of the performance, as the students appreciate having their grandparents in the audience as much as the grandparents enjoy seeing their grandchildren up on stage.

Because not all students would have grandparents in attendance for the production, however, it was decided that members of a local seniors’ care home would also be invited as ‘surrogate grandparents’. This partnership with Happyville Manor (a pseudonym), a care facility just a few kilometers from Beachview that one of the grade four classes had visited a few months earlier, was encouraged by the students who asked if the residents would be able to come to see their show. The children also sent out invitations, inviting the residents, with the result being a bus load of approximately twenty senior citizens coming for the matinee performance. While no students mentioned this visit in their questionnaire responses, many were visibly excited to see these familiar faces in the crowd, and several shared comments with each other and with the seniors about their pleasure in seeing these special guests at the show. Similarly, the seniors’ applause, smiles, and congratulatory remarks suggest that the performance was also a highlight for them. Clearly, a bond between two very diverse groups of people was strengthened by the attendance of senior citizens at a children’s school musical.

Penny, one of the crew members responsible for props, recognized this building of community as she was on stage taking part in the final number of the show. She notes: “I enjoyed ‘Caring, Sharing’ because it was nice to see everybody singing and parents [and grandparents] smiling”. Her awareness of the joy of singing the finale, surrounded by all the school’s students from kindergarten to grade four, with a smiling audience looking on, confirms that the community present for this production did care. This

connection between cast mates, and between those on stage and those in the audience, echoes the interactive “conversation” described by Stublely (1993, p. 97). Yes, the students were ‘giving’ something to the audience through their engaging and whole-hearted performance, but the audience was also giving something back to the students through their encouraging smiles and sincere applause. In this way, everyone in the Great Hall was privy to being a part of something uplifting and interactive, which by its caring nature strengthened bonds.

As the name “Caring, Sharing” implies, many of the songs and words in the musical most likely also played a role in this community-building. Pam, for example, learned that “...things can’t make you happy, you need people”. This message of the importance of relationships over material items was emphasized throughout the show, as Goldilocks states plainly in the last scene: “I realized that I can’t be happy with things. They’re just things... I wasn’t to spend time with people... that is what’s important!” (Greenwood, 2007, p. 11, emphasis as in original script). Shayleen also recognized the importance of this message, and indicated that it was something that she particularly enjoyed about the musical experience, too. She writes: “I liked at the end singing Caring Sharing because we should all be caring, shareing [sic] and it goes with are [sic] community”. Beachview does value community, and prides itself on being a caring place, so Shayleen’s insightful response is not surprising. It does, however, further indicate that many students became more aware of this important connection between caring and community as a result of their involvement with this show.

It appears that Case Study #1, a musical with young elementary school students (kindergarten through grade four) at Beachview Junior School, was an authentic,

integrated performing arts experience for its participants. The feedback from student participants, while mixed, suggests that many now have new understandings and appreciation for others, both of which, I believe, have contributed to the students' growth as performing artists and individuals. Through this personal growth and caring for others, it appears that the independent school community that is Beachview has also been strengthened.

I turn my attention now to Case Study #2, to see if the same might also be said of a musical that involves older elementary school students.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY #2 (*FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*)

Setting the Stage

The second case study examined involves older elementary school students. As was the case with the case study presented in chapter 3, the subjects are all children at Beachview Junior School (a pseudonym to protect the participants' anonymity), a co-educational, non-religious, kindergarten to grade seven university preparatory independent school in metropolitan Vancouver, Canada. At Beachview, all students in the upper elementary school grades take part in a school musical every second year, alternating with the younger students in grades kindergarten to grade four, who, as we saw in the third chapter, also present a musical. The children in this study were grade four to seven students involved with the school musical in the spring of 2007. (The cross-over of grade four students in the two case studies is a result of a shift in the educational programming at Beachview and a relationship with the International Baccalaureate Organization. Grade four students used to be a part of the intermediate program with the grade five, six, and seven students, but are now grouped with the younger students under the Primary Years Programme. This musical in the spring of 2007 was the last time that they would perform with the older students; beginning in the spring of 2009, this school musical would include only grade five, six, and seven students, the Middle Years Programme students.)

While the grade four and five students played a role in this production, they are not the focus of this study. As was the case with the musical case study described in chapter three, the younger students in this musical were involved exclusively in class numbers. That is, the grade four and five students were a part of the production through

their class songs, which they learned in music class and integrated into the larger production during school hours. These songs were an important part of the musical, and included singing, movement, and acting in character; they did not, however, include speaking roles, meaning that no auditions or extra curricular rehearsals were required. In this way, these students were given the opportunity to be involved in an upper elementary school musical without any extra pressure or responsibility. The philosophy here was that the students would enjoy the ‘taste’ of the experience and would then want to be more heavily involved with the next Middle Years Programme (MYP) musical, two years hence, when they would be in grade six or seven. From all anecdotal accounts, as well as the number of students who audition for roles in these productions every two years, this seems to be the case.

The grade six and seven students, as has always occurred at Beachview School, were given the main roles in this production as recognition of their place as the school’s oldest students. (Many elementary schools reserve this special privilege exclusively for the grade seven students, but because the MYP musical is held only every second year at Beachview, grade sixes are also included so that they do not miss their turn to be leaders.) The grade six and seven students are also the focus of this case study, including 88 students, 44 grade six students and 44 grade seven students, with a mixture of both boys and girls in each grade. Some of these students had major roles in the cast, while others had much smaller roles to play, including several who were not formally cast and took part only in their grade numbers. By design, their involvement in these two larger group numbers made them a part of the chorus. All students were observed as they prepared for the musical by participating in rehearsals both in and out of class between the months of

January and March, 2007. The following spring, they were asked to complete the same questionnaire that the students in Case Study #1 did in which they were able to provide open-ended feedback about the experience of being part of a school musical. Summary charts that include all collected student responses are included in this dissertation as Appendix D (grade six responses) and Appendix E (grade seven responses). To protect the students' anonymity, pseudonyms are used instead of real names. In total, 66 out of 88 students (75%) responded, with the breakdown being 37 out of 44 grade six students (84.1%) and 29 out of 44 grade seven students (66%) responding.

My Role

Much like was the case in Cast Study #1, I wore many different hats as this production unfolded. I was a member of the musical production team with my colleagues, Donna, Jackie, Jody, and Kristian. This time, however, my role as a member of this team was somewhat different. I was not formally teaching music to any class group at this time; my teaching assignment was exclusively as a grade four homeroom teacher and I was only on the periphery of what was happening in the music class rehearsals, not front and centre as I was during the PYP musical described in the previous chapter. Similarly, while I was very involved in the extra curricular rehearsals and was officially a co-director of this production, the magnitude of this show and the consequent size of the production team meant that each teacher had a specific area of focus; mine was as piano accompanist. This meant that while I worked with the students at many rehearsals, it was rarely in the capacity of director. I certainly coached cast members as they learned songs in the early rehearsals and also took part in script read-throughs, but most of my rehearsal time was spent behind the piano. From this vantage point I

frequently offered feedback to the cast, but I rarely took a lead role in running the rehearsals. My role as researcher was somewhat different than in the previous case study. I was still a “participant as observer” (Merriam, 1988, pp. 92, 93), but this time there was more emphasis on “observer” and less on “participant”, at least from the students’ perspective. Because of this, it is my belief that the students were particularly open and honest in their questionnaire responses (see Appendices D and E). It is also my belief that this slightly more distant role from the forefront of this production will lead to less bias on my part than might be the case if I was the sole director of this show. I do acknowledge that I still have a personal connection to this musical production, and will attempt to keep my analysis of the student feedback as neutral as possible. As in chapter three, I will include direct student quotes from the questionnaires as often as possible to lessen the possibility of misinterpretation or biased analysis.

The Choice of Musical

Burnau (1966) notes that, frequently, school musicals are well-known Broadway productions to which the school attains performance rights (pp. 98-102). Traditionally, this meant that elementary schools that wanted to produce a beloved show had no choice but to pay the large fees for the full-length production. Adjustments to this script were then rarely made, for the fees had been paid and the contract had been signed – usually along with the promise that no part of the show would be altered. Fortunately, when Music Theatre International, a New York-based company, released the *Broadway Junior* scripts in 1998, this all changed. As the company’s website explains, “Broadway Junior adapts classic and contemporary musicals into 70-minute editions perfect for middle-

school aged performers" (Music Theatre International's Broadway Junior Collection, n.d.).

Having used the *Broadway Junior* scripts before, the Beachview musical theatre team of teachers decided that this was certainly the decision to make again for the school musical production in March 2007. Having worked with both a traditional musical theatre script (in the Junior School's production of *Narnia* in 2003) and a *Broadway Junior* script (in the 2005 production of *Once On This Island Junior*), the team knew that the junior versions were more appropriate for the students in terms of length and vocal arrangements. These scripts are "perfect" for ten to thirteen year old students and address many of the critics' concerns that were discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. By selecting one of these shows to produce, the musical team was being pro-active in trying to make this an educationally-positive experience for the students.

Which of the many available scripts to choose? After first considering *Annie Junior*, the team opted instead for *Fiddler on the Roof Junior* for several reasons, the most important being the large number of roles in the cast, the quality of the music, and the musical's themes. This musical's large number of roles meant that parts could be given to the most possible students, while its fine music meant that all students would be exposed to music that would not only be enjoyable, but also artistically rich. Finally, *Fiddler on the Roof's* messages of family, tradition, and tolerance seemed to be a natural fit with the school's values. This musical was selected and the production rights were purchased in the fall of 2006.

The Audition Process

Janicki (1982) discusses the audition process in school musicals, stating her position that not all those students who audition should be cast, for it could “be potentially detrimental to the production” and “is unfair to the people who are genuinely qualified for their parts and degrades the position of a chorus member” (p. 30). Even if one does not agree with Janicki’s first claim, which certainly sounds overly-dramatic for a school musical production, she does raise a valid point with her claim that there is an element of “unfair[ness]” when everyone who auditions is given a part. If everyone is given a part, why even have the auditions at all? (This was the musical team’s prerogative in not holding auditions and instead casting all students based on personal choice and teacher knowledge for the Primary Years Programme (PYP) musical described in the previous chapter.)

For this MYP production, the team unanimously agreed to cast only the number of roles that were available. (This was in contrast to earlier musicals for the grade four to seven students, such as the school’s 2003 production of *Narnia*, where extra roles were written into the script by the team so that all those who auditioned would be given a part.) This decision was made for a number of reasons, with the most obvious being the additional time required to modify the script to include everyone. Another very important consideration was the authenticity of the audition experience. While it was clear that it would be too dramatic for young children (such as the grade four students who had the starring roles in the PYP musical) to be ‘cut’, the team believed that it would be a valid learning experience for the grade six and seven students to see what it would be like to go through a ‘real’ audition. Our perspective was that these students would

soon be high school students, where cuts are very common in the realms of arts, athletics, and academics. Introducing them to these cuts before that time would give them exposure to this reality while the supportive hands of their elementary school teachers were still there to help them up after their disappointment. It seemed that those who worked hard and were the best choices for the roles should be rewarded with the assigning of complete parts from a real script – not some modified roles that had been shared out amongst even those who had not adequately prepared.

While the authenticity of the audition process was good in theory, however, it was not so positive in reality. Because this was the first audition for many students, several were already very nervous. As Tabitha, a fine actor who ultimately was cast in the leading role of Golde recalls: “The part [of the musical process] I least enjoyed [was] the auditioning process because it was nerve-racking and there was a lot of pressure”. Pressure was heightened by the realization by the students that there were more students auditioning than there were roles to be assigned. Not only was there pressure to get a leading part; there was now also pressure to get *any* part. Some hard-working and well-prepared students did not get a role because of this pressure and the tough competition from their peers. While this is a reality of auditioning, and in that way is a feature of an authentic arts experience, it was disheartening for some of those who did not receive a part in the cast. Tanya, a very hard-working and academically strong student, explains her experience: “I auditioned for the play but did not make any part. I know I’m not a very good actor and that I get nervous in front of people and I expected that. That was my worst favourite [least favourite] part because I was very nervous and a little embarrassed”. It is positive to read in Tanya’s reflection that she was not necessarily

expecting to be cast, and so had prepared herself for this, as all actors who audition must do. At the same time, it is very unfortunate to read that she was “embarrassed” by the experience and considers herself to be “not a very good actor”. At best, Tanya already saw herself as a poor actor and her audition experience reiterated this in her mind; at worst, she has come to see herself as a poor actor *because* of this audition experience. Whatever the case, this is a problem when we are dealing with a young student who has a whole lifetime of performing arts ahead of her. Yes, Tanya was still given the chance to participate in her class numbers so she was in the show, and yes, she was also given an important role as a member of the backstage (props) crew, but this does not override the fact that her audition was not good enough to get her a part in the cast. Will she still be willing to take a chance and audition for future productions – or will she now be hesitant of putting herself in such a vulnerable position? Only time will tell.

It is important to note that the musical team took their audition responsibilities very seriously. All members of the team read through the script in advance of the auditions and pre-selected two possible audition scenes that the students could pick from for their auditions. Similarly, a portion of “Sunrise, Sunset” was chosen as the audition piece, and students were invited to two practice sessions where this audition song was taught, giving students the best possible chance to be prepared for their auditions and to make the auditions themselves an educational experience. Most students seemed to appreciate this guidance, but some questioned the authenticity of this. Liz, for example, “...didn’t really like how for audition we had a choosen [sic] song to say”. She noted that, from her perspective, “...it would be more effective if we had a choice of song”. While her comments are valid, particularly as many professional auditions allow those

trying out to sing a selection of their choosing, this process did seem to be generally effective in setting students up for successful auditions.

At the auditions themselves, the students were called in to the audition room (the music room) one at a time where they sang the before-mentioned musical selection for the musical team panel. I played the piano while my colleagues sat at the table and took notes. The auditioning student then said his or her lines in the chosen scene's dialogue while one of the teachers read the other part. All notes were kept completely confidential and were later discussed as the casting took place. The students were cast on the basis of their audition: quality of singing (particularly staying in key), vocal projection, acting skills (characterization), confidence, preparedness, and fit for their role. The latter of these was enhanced by the fact that the teacher directors had seen a local theatre production of this show just a few weeks before these auditions and so had at least some understanding of the show's characters. The students also had a part in this. All had the opportunity to complete an application form - which included their top role choices - that they submitted to the musical team at their audition. Most students were made aware of the roles they were auditioning for by receiving a brief character descriptions sheet, viewing a local stage production, and/or renting the movie to learn more about the characters.

As the cast lists were posted after school on the Friday following the auditions, restrained emotions were evident. The faces of those students who had been cast in leading roles shone, while those who had not been cast showed visible disappointment. At the same time, it was clear that in both cases students were doing their best to model neutrality, perhaps out of respect for those who were not in the same situation as

themselves. No student, nor parent, brought forth any concerns with the audition process and only one who auditioned commented on her role. This was Twyla, a grade six student who commented: “I wish I would of [sic] tried out for a bigger role”. She does not seem to be dissatisfied in any way about the auditions themselves, and in particular does not seem concerned that the auditions were not ‘fair’. Rather, Twyla seems to be disappointed that she did not pursue a larger role, as is evident by her use of the word “I”. Does her comment, which seems to suggest that she wishes she had had the opportunity to be more involved in the show, have anything to do with the rehearsal process that the students experienced? I shall examine this further as I turn my attention to these rehearsals.

The Rehearsals

As was the case with the PYP musical at Beachview, once the cast list had been posted, the students who had been assigned speaking roles were brought together before the Christmas break to meet each other and learn more about the story of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Scripts were distributed and contracts were signed in which the students promised to honour the commitments that were expected of them over the next several months. It was requested that students go through their scripts over the holidays and highlight their lines; they were also encouraged to begin to practice their parts, in anticipation of a memorization deadline of the end of January and the upcoming performances that would be held the week before spring break (March 13-15, 2007). Students who had not yet seen the *Fiddler on the Roof* movie were encouraged to watch it over the holidays so that they would come back in the new year with further understanding of the plot, setting, and characters. While it could be argued that this exposure to a Hollywood interpretation of

the musical would set the bar too high for the students, or even restrict their interpretation of characterizations, the musical team deemed it the right decision for the age of the students and the intensity of the play. The movie, it was decided, would give the students the grounding that they needed to start rehearsals from somewhere. This philosophy is supported by Ross and Durgin (1983) who suggest that before students get too far into the rehearsal process they are given “an opportunity to see their play done by someone else” (p. 26). While this may not always be effective, in this case study it was. Students returned from their holidays having been exposed to a musical that, for many of them, was relatively unknown until this point. They now had enough background information that the rehearsals could begin in earnest.

Because the students were older than those in *Once Upon a Tale*, the rehearsal schedule was more intense. Rehearsals were held two days a week after school and during two of the lunch hours in the school’s six day timetable cycle. The rehearsal schedule (sample attached as Appendix F) was posted two weeks at a time, and was always posted by no later than the Friday before the new week would begin. This gave the students and their families time to plan other activities so that they could uphold the contract and not miss rehearsals. Most families honoured this, while a few asked to be excused from certain practices due to other out-of-school commitments such as ski racing. The musical team was as flexible as possible, strongly encouraging participation at all rehearsals while never telling a child that they *had* to miss any other commitments. While in many ways this was admirable and respectful of the individual, in other ways it allowed certain students to put themselves before the community. In this way, Engel’s

(1983) recommendation that “Performers should always remember that they are part of a vast whole” was not heeded (p. 125).

As February marched on and the performance dates moved closer, extra lunch hour practices were scheduled. While this was not ideal, the music team felt that these rehearsals were needed. For limited impact on the student’s personal time, no extra beyond-the-school-day rehearsals were added, with the exception of one Saturday rehearsal the weekend before the show opened – a rehearsal which had been written into the original contract. Similarly, all extra times were noted on the rehearsal calendar, with specific scenes scheduled at specific times for the least disruption to student schedules. While students were quite open to the original lunch hour rehearsals, however, they were understandably less positive about these extra rehearsals. This is not surprising, for these rehearsals were not indicated in the original contract and obviously added an extra burden to the students’ already busy schedules. No student specifically mentioned these extra rehearsals in a negative light in their questionnaire responses, but both Vi and Kimmy, two students who had smaller roles in the show, did indicate that lunch hour rehearsals in general were their least favourite part of the musical experience. For Vi, she missed having her social time with her friends, “none [of whom]... where [sic] in the play”. She also found these rehearsals to be “long and boring”, yet acknowledged that “... the end result [was] fun”.

Like the lunch hours, class time, which had been used sparingly up until this point, was now used more regularly. As was the case with the PYP production, classes were put together so that grade groups could practice their scenes as a whole. Likewise, main characters such as Tevye (played by Louis) were pulled as needed from their

regular classes so that they could be integrated into the group numbers. From a teacher's perspective, these missed classes were not ideal, but were a necessity in order to accommodate all that needed to be accomplished in the limited time that existed before the show would see the stage. From the students' perspective, missing classes was a big deal. This was particularly true of the grade six students. Eleven of the thirty-seven grade six students who completed the questionnaire made specific comments about this. Seven of these students (approximately 19% of grade six respondents) liked missing their other classes for rehearsals. Part of this was because of the "fun teachers" running these rehearsals, as Braden noted, but another reason for this was that some students enjoyed "skipping school" (Andy). Three of the twenty-nine grade seven students (approximately 10%) also mentioned this as being something that they enjoyed. In fact, Philip "...most enjoyed taking time in school to work on the play to miss classes...", while Brandi's favourite thing about this whole musical experience was "wasting class time". Comments such as these are certainly a concern, not so much because the students enjoyed missing other classes, but because they saw these musical rehearsals as an out from their academic subjects. While we want students to find pleasure in the arts, we don't want them to see them as a 'waste', or even a 'break' from their studies – but as serious subjects in their own right that have value and require discipline, too.

At the other extreme, four of the thirty-seven grade six students (approximately 11%) didn't like missing classes for rehearsals. Gurgot, a member of the class numbers who ultimately end up missing the performances due to a leg injury, put it bluntly: "I didn't enjoy taking time off my classes". Hilary, a main character who played one of the daughters, explained more precisely why this was an issue: "We spent a lot of time

missing whole classes and there was a lot of catch-up work I had to do.” While this may not sound like a particularly big problem, but rather a reality of working on a large scale production, it is important to remember that these are not professionals, nor high school students. These are young students, eleven to thirteen years old, who have to juggle the musical with school work, extra curricular activities, commitments with their families and friends – while still leaving some time for play!

These rehearsals were particularly hard on the main characters, for while those students in the group scenes would miss class as a grade group (and so have limited work to catch up on), those with significant roles were, as Hilary suggested in her comment, pulled from class to attend rehearsals with other grades. This did leave them with extra work to attend to, which is no easy task at an independent university preparatory school such as Beachview. Certainly, the teachers are very understanding and supportive, but the standards are also very high; it is not possible to coast or fall under the radar. In Hilary’s case, the result of all this extra pressure was that she would not like to participate in future productions, despite the fact that she “learned a lot…” and she “... really like[s] performing...”. In this way, it could be argued that these additional in-class rehearsals, while beneficial to the quality of this particular performance, may have actually had a negative longer-term impact to students such as Hilary, by dissuading them from taking part in future productions.

Despite this fact, the rehearsal experience in itself was very positive for many of the students. This was particularly true for those who had larger roles. Tabitha, for example, who played the leading role of Golde, the mother, wrote that she “... loved working at rehearsals and staging out an act and then running through it and getting it

right". She went on to explain that these rehearsals "... gave us a sense that we had accomplished something and made the end show that much [more] rewarding". Similarly, Felicity and Neelja, both of whom played sisters, called the rehearsals "helpful", with Neelja elaborating to describe the rehearsal process as a "fun, learning experience... [that] makes you feel prepared...". In this way, it could be argued that these rehearsals were authentic for the students as they met Engel's challenge of offering specific suggestions and guidance. He writes: "No players – experienced or inexperienced – can participate in making a performance if they are not guided by the musical director in understanding the piece they are trying to perform..." (Engel, 1983, p. 110). These main cast members clearly felt "guided", as their comments indicate.

Was the same also true of those students who had smaller roles in the production? In the case of students such as Lily, the answer is a definite "yes". Though playing the supporting cast role of a villager, she still found the rehearsals to be "...a good learning experience". Moreover, like Mandy, another village who described herself as playing a "minor part", Lily also described the rehearsals as "fun". Mandy explains why this was the case: "Everyone really tried and it was a lot of fun getting to practice and watching the group get better". These comments indicate enthusiasm, which Ross and Durgin (1983) insist is the responsibility of the musical team at "all rehearsals" (p. 41). They explain that this is paramount because the student actors feed off the energy of the musical directing team, which appeared to be true in this production. The directors seemed to keep the students engaged with their positive attitudes, humour, and embodying of the school's guiding principle of being a "light-hearted place of serious purpose" (no reference given to protect anonymity of school and students). At the same

time, this sense of fun was balanced, as Mandy noted when she added to her description of “fun” with the words “...and yet organized”. Elyse concurred, using the words “calm” and “non stressful” to describe the rehearsals. In this sense, even at the busiest times, at least some students felt that the intensity of the rehearsals was kept in check.

Unfortunately, these feelings were not universal amongst all participants. In fact, two students in particular, both of whom had supporting cast roles, had specific comments about the rehearsals not being particularly well organized. Madeline least enjoyed the rehearsals because she felt that “...there were some changes that were made before the performance”; perhaps for this reason, she described the rehearsals as “haptic [sic], busy, [and] unprepared...” By contrast, she noted that the performances were “prepared” – leading one to suspect that she prefers the neatly-wrapped final package to the get-your-hands-dirty nature of the rehearsals. Madeline’s comments are valid, of course, for there were certainly times when scenes would be run with various alternatives to blocking, and other times when student movements were changed because in the moment something different seemed like it would work better. From a child’s perspective, this could most certainly be frustrating.

Similarly, it is easy to understand the frustration that Gloria must have felt when she “... was sick and ... missed learning the choreography”. She disliked this, particularly because she did not feel that the musical team accommodated her adequately in helping her catch up upon her return. While much of this responsibility was her own, it is quite certain that she would not have ‘slipped through the cracks’ had she been a main cast member; she would have been briefed by a member of the musical team the next time her scene was run. It is an unacceptable oversight that she felt lost in the busy-

ness of all that was going on in the rehearsals around her and is certainly something that must be addressed in future productions.

In general, it was the supporting cast members such as Madeline and Gloria who were most critical of the rehearsals. Edgar, for example, was very clear in this fact: “I found that the enduring rehearsals was [sic] very boring, especially being a minor character...” Dylan agreed, noting that he did not want to be in future productions because of his experience with *Fiddler on the Roof*. He explained that “I had a small part so it was boring for me”. In particular, he called the rehearsals “lame, not fun, [and] unenjoyable [sic]” – mostly because, it seems, that they were “long”. Eryka, another student who was part of the chorus exclusively, concurs. She offers further insights into Dylan’s perspective as she notes that she felt that there was a lot of “waiting around” at the rehearsals. (Interestingly, however, she would still like to be in future musicals because she found them to be “...fun in general”.)

Two interesting observations can be made as a result of the student comments given above. First, the rehearsals were lengthy – sometimes up to two hours in length, although breaks were given. This would make it “boring” for those students who had smaller parts, particularly if they did not ‘buy in’ to the old adage that “there are no small actors...” They did have to “wait around” at times as adjustments were made and lead characters were integrated with class numbers – and these times required patience. It is interesting to note a second observation here: as these sample comments suggest, while both male and female supporting cast members could find criticisms with the rehearsals, the girls were usually able to find some positives to balance their concerns. Eryka’s comment is a good example of this, as she acknowledged that despite some individual

parts that she did not enjoy, the overall musical experience was positive for her. This stands in stark contrast with Donny, a boy who had a role equivalent to Eryka's. He also found the rehearsals to be "long and boring", but unlike Eryka's recognition of the fun element, Donny's favourite part of the whole experience was "when we had our last day of our play". Is this a reflection on the perspective of many adolescent males towards the musical? Is the reality that if you "don't like them" (to quote Donny, who would not want to participate in nor watch another musical), there is nothing that can be done to make participating in a school musical a positive experience – or, is this an isolated response? These are, most certainly, questions for future research.

Interestingly, even those members of the cast who had main roles didn't enjoy the redundancy of rehearsing scenes "over and over again" (to quote Hilary). This suggests that even if one is a main character, the intensity of the rehearsals can make them the least positive part of the musical experience. This was the case for Quinn, who played the important role of Yente, the matchmaker. She explained her reasoning for this as follows: "I know you have to practice to get better but it was so tiring sometimes!" This was the reality with the Beachview School version of *Fiddler on the Roof*, as it most likely is with other school musical productions, too. As students' energy diminishes, the repetitive nature of rehearsals can be draining. Patricia recognized that these rehearsals were necessary because "you ha[ve] to repeat some parts over and over to get them right", but, like Quinn, they were also her least favourite part of the musical experience. In her case, she found this repetition both "tiring and boring", ultimately connecting these two words, and offering further insight into why some students may have found the rehearsals to lack excitement. When we are tired, we are generally less engaged, and

things are perhaps not as fun as they might be when we are fully rested. In this sense, it is more our own state of being that is responsible for our perceptions, rather than the experience itself. In other words, as the saying goes, an experience is what you make of it. One student might find a rehearsal to be “boring” because of its repetitive nature, while another might find this same rehearsal to be stimulating and even “fun”. York touches upon this in his paradoxical comments. He least enjoyed “when practice was not engaging” – and yet he describes the rehearsals as being “...always active and engaging”. If the rehearsals were “*always... engaging*” (my emphasis), and yet he didn’t enjoy the practices that he found to not be engaging, York’s daily perspective must be the factor that made the difference. In this sense, factors such as sleep, workload, part in the cast, and other personal issues all played a role in how students experienced the rehearsals. This is a reality not only in musical rehearsals, but also in our school classrooms – and this is one of the things that made these rehearsals authentic experiences for the Beachview students.

It must be recognized that musical rehearsals, particularly at an independent school that prides itself on delivering a strong arts program, are intense. Engel (1983) addresses this with his comment that “Discipline in theater is more essential than in the army” (p. 36). Yes, the experience should be both “fun” and “engaging”, but it must also be productive. That is, after all, the “serious purpose” part of the school’s second guiding principle (no reference given to protect anonymity of school and students). Wentworth, a grade six student who had a supporting role, but participated with as much heart as any of the main characters, recognized this. Like many of the other students, he least enjoyed the rehearsals, noting that “The thing that I didn’t enjoy at all was practicing...”. Unlike

some of the others, Wentworth also recognized the value of rehearsing with an eye on discipline, learning, and improvement, as he finished his statement with the following understanding: "...but it did make me have a better performance". This mature response seems to best reflect the range of responses from the students involved with the *Fiddler on the Roof* rehearsals: some enjoyed them and some hated them, but whether they recognized it or not, everyone learned something that enhanced their performance. The question now is, was this performance an authentic one with true arts integration?

The Issue of Arts Integration

Like *Once Upon a Tale*, *Fiddler on the Roof* provided students with opportunities to be involved with a variety of the performing arts. Specifically, this production had many wonderful group numbers that lent themselves naturally to singing and dancing. For example, the opening number, "Tradition", which involved all the grade seven students, gave each of the participants a chance to sing and dance – not only with the full class, but also in a smaller ensemble. Jody, who worked with the students on this number, was able to feature one-quarter of the class during each verse: the 'papas' were first, followed by the 'mamas', the 'sons', and the 'daughters' respectively. The students then all sang and danced the chorus, which tied the number together and truly integrated these two art forms. A similar number, "To Life", allowed the grade six students to fully experience arts integration. In this song, students were again required to sing and dance, and this time they were also required to act their parts as characters in a tavern. From these two examples alone, it is evident that all students involved with this production, whether or not they had leading roles, were exposed to a variety of the arts because of their seamless integration. The students recognized this, too. In fact, all but three

students who responded to the questionnaire indicated, without teacher prompting, that they had participated in at least two art forms (34 of the 37 responding grade six students recognized that they participated in at least two arts, while 29 of the 29 responding grade seven students recognized this: see Appendices D and E). This indicates that almost all participants saw the school musical as an integrated arts experience.

Ratliff and Trauth (1988) note that even some long-time critics of the musical theatre genre have started to acknowledge that there can be positive results when “...story, characters, music, dance, and spectacle are imaginatively integrated into a production...” (p. 3). The questionnaire responses suggest that most students involved with *Fiddler on the Roof* found this to be the case. Unity, for example, noted that “It was fun to sing and dance”, and her classmate Wentworth agreed with this, indicating that enthusiasm for this music-movement connection was not limited to girls. He explained his favourite part of the experience as follows: “What I liked the most was singing and dancing to the first song in the play”. This is very positive, for it was through the music and its natural fit with the choreography that Wentworth had exposure to a performing art that he might have never otherwise experienced. Perhaps just as importantly, he *enjoyed* this process of integrating the singing and dancing. This suggests that the integration of the arts can open new doors to arts previously undiscovered in the lives of students. Who knows where this new-found pleasure found for singing and dancing may take Wentworth?

Like Wentworth, Asha “learnt that acting, singing and dancing are really fun”. Beyond this recognition of the enjoyable nature of these arts on their own, however, she also appreciated the particular joy that can come from “...be[ing] able to use [these]

different skills to make a play...” This observation echoes the words of Kefgan (1981), who called the musical “the one complete performance opportunity” (p. 12). Arguably, nothing exposes children to more of the performing arts than the musical. They fit together so naturally, like pieces of a puzzle: music, dance, and acting all contributing their part to the whole. Wesley, a grade six student who played the role of the student radical Perchik, recognized this. He explained that his learnings included “...how to do stage directions, how to sing and dance and act”. While the latter part of his comment is quite general, Wesley most certainly did grow as a singer, dancer, and actor throughout the two months of musical rehearsals. His singing became stronger, his dance moves crisper, and his acting more intense. Braden’s comments suggest more basic, but no less important, growth as a performing artist. He learned “new songs and dance moves”, both of which he would not have experienced were it not for *Fiddler on the Roof*. Both of these cases suggest that the artistic integration made possible by a musical can be not only enjoyable for students, but also meaningful.

Brenna, a strong visual artist, reminds us by her questionnaire response that some of the students at Beachview participated not only in the performing arts, but also the visual arts, as they worked on this musical. She took part in “poster and program creation” and also worked on the sets in the lead-up to the show. This is significant, as it reminds us how many different art forms can be touched upon as students go through the process of preparing a musical production. Yes, there was integration of performing arts in the Beachview School production, but for the dozen students who were part of the Art Club that designed and painted the sets for the show, there was integration of visual art, too. This was also the case for those students who participated in the technical crew, as

they learned the art of light and sound engineering. Further, it could be argued that all students learned the importance of these arts because their inclusion enhanced the production and contributed to the complete aesthetic of the musical.

Interestingly, while Brenna, a supporting cast member, recognized that she had also participated in acting, singing, and dancing, she felt it necessary to add the words “sort of” to explain her involvement with these performing arts. This is significant, particularly when one considers that she added this comment to the questionnaire, even when no direction was given to indicate level of involvement, nor lines provided for further commentary. In this way, Brenna’s comment suggests that she did not truly feel that her experience with these arts was as significant as she would have liked it to be, or as she felt it needed to be to warrant a fully positive response. Her comments might serve as a warning that Binnema (1996) is correct to question whether the integrated nature of the musical can lead to a “water[ing]-down” of the arts (p. 46). While Binnema seems to be more concerned with the artistic integrity of the musical as a complete entity, and Brenna seems to be more concerned with her perceived lack of involvement as a supporting cast member, their comments are related. This is because we are trying to determine if students can have an authentic integrated artistic experience as they participate in a musical production. If the music, choreography, and story are all strong, but the opportunities for true involvement with these strong elements is restricted to the main cast, then the experience for the supporting cast might still be a “watered-down” one. As arts educators, this is of concern. Brenna participated in the same opening number as Wentworth, who, as we know, spoke positively about his participation in this singing and dancing number. Because both students were supporting cast members and

all other elements were also the same, it seems that it was the students' perceptions of the experience that were different. In this way, we can surmise that Wentworth was satisfied with his experience, while Brenna would have appreciated more opportunities for involvement with the arts. This does not mean, however, that Brenna's experience was "watered-down" – just less than she desired.

While Brenna's questionnaire feedback suggests that she didn't consider her arts participation in *Fiddler on the Roof* to be complete, other students found their participation to be more than they wanted. These students acknowledged that they were exposed to a variety of the arts because of the integrated nature of the musical, but did not appreciate it. Dylan, for example, least enjoyed "People *making* [him] sing and dance" (my emphasis). Like all other students in grades four to seven at Beachview, Dylan was required to participate in this musical; his comment, however, indicates that he felt that this was unfair and that he was 'forced' to do something that he didn't want to. Elyse, a student like Dylan who had a supporting role, also had something to say about this 'forced' integration. Offering a constructive suggestion for future productions, she stated: "...I think there should be less singing parts for those who love to act, but not to sing". While further discussion with Elyse clarifies that this is because she sees herself as a strong actor and a weak singer (a feeling, unfortunately, likely enhanced by an audition that did not result in a cast role), another student is clear that he has similar feelings because he doesn't like singing 'interfering' with acting. Konrad, who like Dylan and Elyse was a supporting cast member, explains that he does not want to watch future productions because "I don't like to watch story's [sic] sung". While this is a sweeping generalization on Konrad's part, it is a fair perspective which should be acknowledged:

not all students appreciate arts integration. In this way, it is important that teachers remember to balance integrated arts experiences like the musical with other non-integrated activities.

I now turn my attention to another area requiring balance, that of entertainment and arts education.

The Issue of Entertainment

There is little doubt that the Beachview MYP musical is meant to provide entertainment to the school community. So much time and energy goes into the learning process, and the performances are a chance for everything to come together as the students are featured and celebrated. The production is meant to showcase the fine arts program at the school, and do so in a big way – but it is not “a public relations gimmick” (Skaggs, 1966, p. 149) where entertainment is put before education. Parents are given the chance to see their sons and daughters on stage, and they do expect to see an impressive performance, but it is most likely that one of the main reasons for this, as Beachview student Xavier observed, is to “...evaluat[e] [student] progress”. However, most expect to see that as their children have learned something, they have also enjoyed the experience of doing so. Enjoyment of the school musical experience relates directly to the issue of entertainment, and came up frequently on the student questionnaires. In fact, one of the most common words that the students used to describe their experience of participating in *Fiddler on the Roof* was “fun”. One of the grade six supporting cast members, Braden, wrote comments which are perhaps the best example of this. In fact, he used the word “fun” six times in his responses, noting that the teacher directors, rehearsals, and performances were all “fun”. Braden specifically enjoyed “act[ing] with [his] friends”

and noted that he would like to be involved in future productions because “It was really fun”. His comments were echoed by Philip, who played the role of Lazar Wolf. He explained that he would like to be in future musicals because it is “...fun to learn your lines and rehearse your scenes”. Likewise, Manjeet, a villager (chorus member), described the rehearsals as “Fun, enthusiastic, lively, and entertaining” and expressed that she “...had fun learning new parts and being part of [a] play, that [she] will always remember...” These responses indicate that the musical process was entertaining and memorable for students who, were it not for the inclusion of *all* students in Beachview’s musicals, would not have been involved. Braden and Philip, for example, are boys who until this point had not participated in any of the school’s extra-curricular arts programs, while Manjeet is a very shy student. Their enjoyment of the experience because of its entertaining nature has now led all three to indicate that they would like to be involved with future productions of the sort.

This is the positive side of the issue of entertainment; the other side, however, is the creation of a sense of stardom, much as it was for the younger students described in the previous chapter. When asked what they most enjoyed about their participation in *Fiddler on the Roof*, several students indicated that they enjoyed the experience of entertaining others. Comments such as Zahir’s were typical. He stated: “I enjoyed being up on stage in front of everybody and acting”. This is not necessarily a problem, for at some level it shows confidence and fulfillment in doing something which one enjoys. Other students, however, were more direct in why they enjoyed being up on stage. Patricia enjoyed the thrill of “Having all eyes on you when performing...” while Kaylee wrote: “I love to be in front of a crowd, I love to be the focus of attention”. Wendy also

enjoyed “...acting in front of crowds” and noted that she plans on being a “famous actress”. She did indicate that she is “...planning to take acting classes *some day*” (my emphasis), but her use of the words “famous” and “some day” suggest that her desire to learn more about acting is secondary to her desire to become a Hollywood star. While we cannot say if these students felt this way before their involvement with this production, it is safe to say that participating in this school musical has, at minimum, affirmed their love of the spotlight and the thrill of being entertainers.

The same can also be said of Trev and Leila, two students who indicated that they were not interested in seeing future musical productions. Their responses of “No” to this question were not due to lack of interest with musical theatre, however; rather, they were enamoured with being the performer instead of the audience member. Trev, for example, stated that instead of watching a future musical, he “... would rather be in it [him]self!”, while Leila explained that she did not want to watch future productions because she “...want[s] to be on the stage”. While there is nothing wrong with this enthusiasm for performing per se, these comments do cause one to reflect and consider the role of entertainment in musicals in which students are involved, particularly if we are striving to develop well-rounded appreciators of the arts.

Ironically, at the other extreme from students such as Trev and Leila are those students who look forward to watching future musicals, precisely because of their entertaining nature. Dakshesh, a grade seven student who had played the supporting role of the bookseller, addressed this issue very directly: “I think that most musicals are very entertaining”. Eryka expanded on this, explaining that she would like to watch future musicals because “It is fun to watch”. The use of the word “fun” once again came up

frequently as students addressed the question of whether or not they would like to watch future productions, much as it did when students were describing their own participation in this musical. Vi, for example, noted that "... it is fun to watch the actors...", while Tanya explained that "... The singing and dancing is also really fun to watch". Interestingly, their comments suggest that for these girls, it is not the glitz and glamour of Broadway musicals that they find to be entertaining, but rather, the watching of performing arts live on stage. Liz, a grade six student who played one of the villagers, also picked up on this. She once again used the word "entertaining" to describe the experience of watching a musical and explained that she would enjoy watching future shows because "Its [sic] like watching a movie right in front of you". Her comment here shows insight for her age, as she has recognized that there is a connection between theatre and cinema. At the same time, however, it perhaps brings the issue of entertainment more to the forefront than any other student response – raising an important question for consideration as it does so: Do students such as Liz see artistic value in musicals, or is their interest exclusively in being entertained?

If the answer is the latter, it is perhaps not surprising, given that even educators may get caught up in focusing on entertainment in musical productions. For example, Janicki (1982) claims that "The objective of the director is to establish an entertaining performer... not to teach acting" (pp. 36, 40). Words such as these, which clearly place entertainment over education, give voice to critics who question the value of school musicals for students. Fortunately, several of the Beachview students involved with *Fiddler on the Roof* recognized that a balance between education and entertainment is possible. Kaylee, for example, described watching a musical as "...a great learning

experience...” that is also “...very entertaining...” and “...fun”. Similarly, Tracy recognized that she could “...learn things...” while enjoying the experience and being entertained. The comments from these girls show that at least some students were able to see that entertainment and education in musical productions can walk hand in hand.

No student recognized this balance, however, more than Rory, a grade seven student who played the role of the town’s Rabbi in the production. He indicated that he wanted to watch future musicals because “They’re funny, entertaining, and you can ... learn from them” – and he wanted to participate in future productions because of the “entertaining” and “satisfying” nature of the experience. These responses remind us that entertainment and enjoyment need not preclude learning, and, in fact, may be a part of a meaningful experience. In other words, just because something is “fun” does not mean that it is not also artistically authentic. The comments of Felicity, a student who had a larger role as one of Tevye’s daughters, also suggest an understanding of this balance between the thrill of entertainment and the enjoyment of the arts in their own right. She liked “...entertain[ing] an audience with [her] talent...” but also found joy in the singing, dancing, and acting themselves. This was also the case for other students, including Edgar, who “loved dancing and singing”, and Trev, who “...wish[ed] that the school could do more plays and musicals”. The passion expressed in these comments suggests that this musical has been about more than mere entertainment. I will now delve deeper to find out what specifically student participants have gained from being a part of this MYP school musical.

The Issue of Aesthetic Awareness and Artistic Skills Growth

It was the goal of the teacher-directors to ensure that students grow as performing artists as they work on *Fiddler on the Roof*, but was this successful? Somewhat surprisingly, student comments in this area were very mixed, with two students (Gurgot and Charlie) claiming that they “...didn’t learn anything” and three other students (Kimmy, David, and Asha) claiming that they learned “a lot”, including how to “act, sing, [and] dance” (Kimmy). While at first glance one may dismiss the comments as being merely a reflection of the students’ overall opinions about musical theatre in general (after all, Charlie clearly states: “I don’t like musicals”, while Kimmy just as overtly announces that she does), it is important that time is spent analysing feedback in each of the specific areas. After all, as was the case with the musical described in the previous chapter, attention was given to each of the performing arts. Each of these shall now be examined, beginning with acting.

Acting

Several students commented about their experience with acting in *Fiddler on the Roof*, with both Bartholomew and Brandi claiming that they learned “how to act” as a result of this school production, and Hilary adding that she “...learned a lot of acting skills...” These seem like quite strong statements, particularly when one considers that two of these three students were not even part of the main cast, but Tracy, another supporting cast member and very thorough student, agrees. She writes: “Although I didn’t have a big part, it helped me learn how to act on stage”. Tracy obviously believes that she learned a great deal about acting, for she adds: “I think that before the auditions we should have had a few drama classes to learn how to act” and also acknowledges that

“In the older grades I would like to participate in a play because I would like to build on my acting skills after having drama for a couple of years”. These comments reflect Emma’s belief that her work with the musical has given her skills in acting that she didn’t have going into the auditions (and clearly wishes that she had had), but also a realistic understanding that these skills will serve as a foundation that can now be built upon with more drama classes and acting experiences.

Other students give specific indications of what skills they believe that they learned as a result of their participation in this musical. Felicity, for example, claims that she learned how to effectively use her voice and speak with expression, as well as “how to perform on stage”. By this, she seems to be referring to vocal projection and dramatic movements, both of which were emphasized as keys to engaging an audience – particularly in a large performance space such as Beachview School’s Great Hall. In fact, these skills were highlighted throughout the rehearsal process, from early scene read-throughs to the dress rehearsal. Wentworth recognized this, noting that one of the “acting techniques” he learned was “...how to interact with the audience”. Such a recognition is a step up from the acting techniques that were emphasized with the younger students discussed in the case study presented in chapter three, showing how the teaching that is connected to a musical performance can be adapted depending on the age and base skill level of the students. In this case, for example, students were educated about not only the importance of speaking loudly and clearly, but also pausing after punch lines, waiting for applause to end before continuing with dialogue, and connecting with the audience via eyes and other non-verbal expressions.

Characterization was also emphasized and was made particularly accessible to the students by the strong and memorable characters in *Fiddler on the Roof*. While many of these characters are certainly “based on stereotypes”, as Ratliff and Trauth (1988, p. 4) remind us is often the case in musicals, they are ideal for preteen actors to work with because they experience a range of emotions as they go through scenes of love, joy, fear, and despair. In this way, there were many opportunities to explore characterization. Neelja, who had a main role as Tzeitel, one of Tevye’s daughters, recognized this. She explains that she particularly enjoyed “...learning how to act, and getting into character...”. Yes, the amazing costumes organized by one of the parent volunteers would have had something to do with this, but what Neelja is referring to is much more than this. It is what Ophelia, who played one of the other daughters, describes as learning “...how to work together with the rest of the cast to make the play believable and emotional”. This involved more than learning one’s lines; it required learning about the play’s setting and thinking about one’s own character, as well as that character’s relationships with others. It also demanded that time be spent on the important theatrical skills of listening to other characters and responding both promptly and appropriately, as well as blocking.

A great deal of time was spent blocking each scene with the students. Jackie, one of the musical team teachers who focused on this aspect of the production, would come to each rehearsal with notes of her vision. Students would then be directed to stand in certain positions in relation to each other, and modifications would be made based on how well this worked, as well as what other suggestions the students may have. Ophelia recognized that blocking was an important part of her learning, stating that these stage

positions and movements had to be learned so that “we could execute them on stage during the play”. Likewise, Louis, who played the leading role of Tevye, also acknowledged the importance of remembering “stage positions” among the “acting skills” that he learned by participating in this production.

Dancing

While *Once Upon a Tale* incorporated student movement as a part of each song, but had only one full dance number, *Fiddler on the Roof* included several dance numbers. All grade six and seven students had the opportunity to be involved with at least two dances, which was planned for two reasons. The first of these was to give students significant exposure to dance, particularly because it is an art form and an area of the provincial curriculum that is all too often given only minimal attention. The second of these reasons was because of the important role that dance plays in professional musical productions. Boland and Argentini (1997) explain this further, noting that “dance propels the [musical] story and sometimes heightens the dramatic effect...” (p. 119). It was hoped that this would be the case with the dance numbers in this school production, and that all students would have the chance to be involved with these important components of the musical.

As mentioned in a previous section in this chapter, there were two numbers that included all forty-four students from a grade. These were the opening song “Tradition” and the bar room scene “To Life”, both of which are traditionally big numbers in *Fiddler on the Roof*. For this production, large-scale choreography was also added to two other songs, “If I Were a Rich Man”, which featured the grade six and seven boys, and “Matchmaker”, which featured the grade six and seven girls. The separation of the

genders for these numbers was incorporated to fit the song lyrics and their related scenes, as well as to give students the chance to dance freely without the pressure of being paired with someone of the opposite sex. In fact, even in the numbers that included both boys and girls, the dances were choreographed in such a way that there was limited partnering and no hand holding. It was hoped that this would make all students feel comfortable so that they could enjoy the process rather than feeling embarrassed or awkward.

Despite these attempts to create a ‘safe’ learning environment, there were a couple of students who did not enjoy the dancing. Charlie, for example, expressed that he “...didn’t enjoy singing and dancing in front of others”. This is not surprising when one considers that, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, he also dislikes musicals. Somewhat more surprising, however, is that one of the leading characters, Philip, also noted that his least favourite part of participating in this production was dancing. He writes: “I did not think I would have to dance when I first tried out [for the musical]”. This comment suggests that Philip was unaware of the important role that dance plays in musicals, and that he was prepared to act and sing, but not to dance. While they were clearly less than enthusiastic, both Charlie and Philip did take part in the dance rehearsals with focus and no overt complaining – and both did learn their dances. This suggests that, despite their comments, the boys’ minds were at least somewhat open to this art form and they did learn something. Further, while they did not enjoy the dancing, they have now been exposed to an art that they would most likely have never experienced were it not for this musical. I believe that this is positive, although I do acknowledge that there is a risk that their dislike of dance has been affirmed by required participation in this school musical.

While Charlie and Philip listed dancing as among their least favourite part of the musical, two other students were very enthusiastic about this component of the show. Shannon, for example, enjoyed “...learning new... choreography [sic]”, a comment which reminds us that, at minimum, this is what all grade six and seven students learned as a result of participating in this musical. If nothing else, each of these students learned new dance steps that they would otherwise not know. In some cases, they will never think of these movements again, but in other cases, they will – either using components for their own choreography, or recognizing them in other dances they watch or do. This is because the dance steps used in musicals are generally quite common and accessible for inexperienced dancers (Grote, 1986). As Grote reminds us, this means that “amateurs, with stamina and good coaching, can do it well” (p. 55).

Almost all of the Beachview students involved with this production were inexperienced dancers, so it was fortunate that the teacher most responsible for the dancing components of the show was a “good coach”. Jody is a drama teacher with high energy, who quickly connects with preteens and teenagers, making her the ideal musical team member for this position. She had her own ideas for choreography, but was also very open to the ideas of the students, as Twyla’s comments confirm. This grade six student explains how she found the rehearsals “fun” because of the opportunity to “make up dance moves with the teacher and experiment”. In other words, Jody served not only as teacher, but also as facilitator, working with the students to help make dance accessible. She taught them basic dance steps, but also incorporated ideas from the students, which allowed them to see that they can all be dancers. The fact that so few students stated that they disliked dance is a tribute to Jody; she opened the minds of many

to the possibilities that exist in the world of dance, while at the same time producing several impressive dance numbers that did, indeed, “propel the [musical] story” (Boland and Argentini, 1997, p. 119).

Music

As with any musical, music was at the heart of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The memorable melodies were first and foremost fun to sing, keeping most students engaged with their catchy tunes and clever words. Dakshesh commented that he “...enjoyed singing in the musical”, and he was not alone. I believe that enjoyment of the music is important as it encourages students to ‘buy in’ to the musical as a whole – which opens them to the learning that can take place through the vocal selections. Student feedback suggests that many of the students involved with this production, particularly those who had leading roles, liked the songs.

Class numbers for this production were addressed during school time, as they were in *Once Upon a Tale*. As Chad noted, there was “a lot” to learn, both in terms of dancing and singing, and so each was addressed separately before the two were combined. The teachers felt that this would ensure maximum student success, and Chad’s comments that he “... learned a lot of dancing and singing” suggest that this was the case. Because the music was enjoyable, but not easy, it was addressed first. Dance steps were then taught using the CD, at which time students could often be heard humming their parts or seen mouthing their words as they worked on the new footwork. Only once this footwork had been confidently learned were students then expected to sing with the piano accompaniment as they danced. Even at this point, there were times when the dance steps were set aside and students were asked to stand and sing to ensure

that lyrics had not been forgotten, nor melodies incorrectly modified. Throughout it all, there was a definite emphasis on vocal care and proper technique.

The musical team was unanimous in its decision that educating the students in proper vocal technique was paramount throughout the rehearsal process. While the *Broadway Junior* vocal scores have been adjusted for younger voices, the team still recognized the risks that Mathis (1966) described, particularly the possibility of vocal strain as students reach for higher notes or ‘shout’ to have their voices be heard. To this end, the musical team heeded the advice of Ross and Durgin (1983), and used the vocal rehearsals to focus on proper breathing techniques, as well as “volume and range” (pp. 58-63). Warm-ups were also held at the start of musical rehearsals, and students were taught the parallel between these warm-up activities and those that athletes do before their games “... to prevent injury” (ibid, p. 61). This was done so that students would not only have the benefit of proper vocal care throughout the duration of the musical, but also so that they would learn the importance of vocal health for a lifetime of singing.

The in-class vocal rehearsals themselves usually followed the same format: vocal warm-up, listen to a recorded version of the song to be learned (as students followed along with the lyrics), learn the song lyrics and melody (usually simultaneously, most often line by line and then stanza by stanza). Difficult sections were addressed as they came up, and vocal tips were given to help students with potential challenges, such as reaching high notes without straining. Finally, time was also spent on diction, tone, and adding expression that suited the words, which were studied in the context of the overall storyline.

While this approach may sound fairly mundane, it served its purpose of allowing the students to learn the music in the limited time that existed, while also providing opportunities for additional learning. Some students even commented that they enjoyed this process, such as Rose who noted: “I liked the music and how we learnt it”. Yes, rote teaching was employed, but it was balanced with ‘teachable moments’ that came up in the context of learning the songs. In this way, many students learned more than just the songs themselves from these lessons. Indeed, Uttara, a supporting cast member, “learned how to sing high notes” as well as how to address tone, while Twyla learned “...better ways to sing...”.

Not all students who were supporting cast members either enjoyed the singing experience, nor felt that they learned anything particularly profound from the rehearsals. Konrad, for example, disliked “all of the rehearsals and the singing” – and indicated that he would not like to be in future productions because he “do[es]n’t like to sing”. While he was not specific about what he didn’t like about the singing rehearsals, and it is possible that, in fact, it was the actual act of singing or the songs themselves that he did not enjoy, it is unfortunate that Konrad was not drawn in by the joy of the music. One might conclude that for some students, perhaps, the way that the singing was approached at these rehearsals was ‘boring’. Interestingly, as was the case with dance, the majority of these comments came from boys. This suggests that more time should be spent educating boys that singing and dancing are activities for both genders, and proving that this is, indeed, true by modifying lessons and rehearsals to meet their needs – ideally considering specific suggestions that they may have.

Of even more concern than Konrad's comments are those of Andy. While he acknowledges that he "...learned new songs...", Andy also claims to have learned that he is "...not good at singing". He did not provide a specific reason as to why he felt this way, but he did indicate that he would not like to participate in future musicals because he does not enjoy "singing in public". His comment suggests that he felt embarrassed by singing with others – either because he perceives himself to be a less capable singer than his peers (perhaps due to his changing voice), or because of a side comment that one of his classmates made. Whatever the case, it is very much a concern that a student would participate in a school production and come out feeling less positive about his own musical skills than before he was involved with the process.

As was the case with the PYP musical described in chapter three, this raises questions as to whether or not the students in the supporting cast are getting the same level of vocal instruction that the main cast is receiving. One of the students raises this issue directly. Brenna writes: "I didn't like the fact that we couldn't sing a lot. I wished that it was a play that you try out for and not make it mandatory because the people that arn't [sic] main part don't get the musical experience that the main part people would get". While it is debatable whether or not the supporting cast had less opportunity to sing than the main cast (less solo or small group singing – but not significantly less singing overall), there is no question that the one-on-one time spent with the main cast working on their singing far exceeded the time spent individually with the other students as they worked on their songs. In this way, Brenna is correct in her claim that the musical experience is different for the two groups.

In fact, none of the leading characters had anything negative to say about the vocal rehearsals. For these students, rehearsals included the in-class practices that all students were a part of, as well as the after school and lunch hour rehearsals dedicated to the main cast. It was at the latter of these rehearsals that the students were given the direct attention that contributed to the musical learning that several of them described. Leading man Louis learned “singing skills” that he did not have before. Similarly, new singer David, who was involved in his first musical, “...learned a lot... [including] how it feels when you sing a solo”. Much time was spent with both of these boys, with particular emphasis placed on learning the melodies. The students each had their own copy of the script/libretto (vocal score) so that they could follow not only the lyrics, but also the movement of the melody. As the supporting cast received general tips on proper singing technique, the soloists received individual attention to their specific needs. If a particular section was deemed too high for their particular voice, that part was re-written. In the case of David, who played Motel the tailor and whose positive comments we read above, his entire song was transposed to better fit his vocal range, with the results speaking for themselves. In this way, Bobetsky (2005) is correct that musicals can be the vehicle that helps students to grow as singers – when “vocal limitations of middle school singers” are considered and parts are rewritten as needed (pp. 34, 36).

The comments of Hilary, who played the role of the daughter Chava, suggest that even students who already have a background in singing can also benefit musically from participating in elementary school musicals. This assumes that they are in the main cast so that they will have the opportunity to work most closely with the directors. Hilary explains how, as a result of her work in *Fiddler on the Roof*, she “...added to [her]

singing vocab”. This was most likely a result of the time spent working on diction, phrasing, and balance with other voices. Each of these was emphasized in the first several weeks of extracurricular rehearsals, where at least two sessions were scheduled to work on each of the songs with the soloists. Based on the quality of the singing in the show, as well as the positive comments (and the lack of negative comments) from main cast members, these vocal rehearsals appear to have been successful and the learning authentic.

Arts Appreciation and Understanding

Many of the comments from the grade six and seven participants in *Fiddler on the Roof* indicate that students have grown in their appreciation of the arts, especially their valuing of the genre that is the musical, presumably thanks to their exposure to an art form that many had not before experienced. Madeline, for example, recognized that she had “learn[ed] a different style of music and art...” than she had experienced before. York agreed, explaining that this had been a new learning experience for him, too. While he had seen plays, this was his first exposure to a musical – and his comments suggest that as a result of his participation his understanding of “how a big musical gets put on” has grown. Several students spoke of new understandings as a result of their work with this musical. Neelja explained that *participating* in a dramatic production had given her new insights than she had from watching plays. As she described it: “...this is like behind the scenes stuff...”.

This “behind the scenes” experience gave many students a new appreciation for the various parts that went into making the ‘whole’ that is the musical. One of the most insightful of the student comments in this regard came from Lily, a student with a

supporting cast role. She writes: “I learned that it takes more than learning lines and singing to create a musical...”. In other words, she recognized that a large scale production is more than a sum of its parts; it is an integration of the arts, coupled with commitment, enthusiasm, and team spirit that contribute to the final product.

While Lily was perhaps a bit overly-dramatic in her additional comment that “...the dancing has to be very perfect or else everything in the play gets messy”, her remark does show an understanding as to why dance numbers – and scenes – are rehearsed again and again. She seems to recognize that a large-scale production requires a high standard, or else it very quickly becomes sloppy. This recognition of the value of striving for excellence is a good lesson for all artists to heed, although I would personally make a distinction between excellence and “perfect[ion]”, and hope that Lily’s comments do not indicate that the directors were pushing the students to unattainable heights. This slight concern is enhanced by Eryka’s comment that “...it is hard to make a musical”. She is, however, correct. Being an artist, a true artist who lives and breathes one’s art, requires dedication, commitment, and sometimes even sacrifice – and this is not easy. Many of the students in this production, for example, sacrificed their free time and had to keep up with ongoing class work, even as they learned lines and practiced songs. Unity noted that “It takes hard work to memorize lyrics and dance steps...”, while Rory added that “...even a smaller role is a lot of work...” These comments suggest that through their experience, the students have developed new appreciation for what it means to be a performing artist.

At the same time, some students also grew in their understanding that a musical is not just about the performing artists, but about the contributions of others, too. Elyse, for

example, noted the importance of visual arts and media arts, as she commented about the sets and character-introducing PowerPoint show. She writes: “I learned how visual parts of a play can improve the overall appearance of things so well. I loved making the slideshow and painting the sets”. Similarly, student props manager Valarie and her assistant Tanya acknowledged their new learning about “how a theatre runs backstage” (Valarie). Tanya explains it as follows: “I learned that even though backstage doesn’t seem like a very important role, it actually is. We not only have to make sure all the sets and props are on the stage at the right time, but we also have to make sure everyone backstage is quiet and goes on at the right time”. The comments from these girls indicate that they recognize that a musical requires the talents of many different people, including those behind the scenes. Hopefully, they are able to extend their understanding to any stage show, so that the next time they attend a musical, opera, or play they have new appreciation for everything that goes into making the finished art form what it is.

With regards to attending future productions, a majority of students indicated that they would now like to watch a musical. Of the 37 grade six students who completed the questionnaire, 28 responded “yes”, while 6 responded “no” and 2 were not sure (1 student did not answer this question). The grade seven results were similar, with 21 of 29 respondents indicating that they would like to watch future musicals, and 8 indicating that they would not or were not sure (7 said “no” and 1 said it depended). One of the reasons that students specifically gave for wanting to watch other musicals was a new appreciation for stage productions because of their participation in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Ophelia, for example, explains how having been a part of this school musical has heightened her interest in similar shows, mostly because she now has greater

understanding of the artistic process. She writes: “I believe that my experience in this performance has made me more aware of the other stage plays and musicals (and operas) being performed in the Lower Mainland and has definitely increased my tolerance for different musical styles, and I can relate more personally to a play whenever I see one now because I’ve been through that process and I know all the things actors have on their minds, like cues and the location of props – this has made watching musicals more interesting”. Heather concurs, noting that it is “...easier to appreciate good musicals after being part of one”. Both of these comments show the girls’ awareness that their perspective has changed because of direct involvement with a musical. This hands-on learning experience has given them the tools to more fully appreciate the work of others.

Several student comments addressed this issue directly. Gurgot, for example, explained that he would like to watch future musicals “because it’s nice to see how hard they worked on it”. Chad responded similarly, noting that he would “...like to think about how they practiced”. Both of these comments show remarkable maturity, particularly coming from two grade six boys. When one considers that both of these students did not have leading roles, but were supporting cast members who participated exclusively in their class numbers, their comments seem even more insightful. Even without attending after-school rehearsals, they have come to understand the commitment that a musical production requires, and they appreciate it.

This appreciation, it seems, developed not only from being on stage, but from watching their peers on stage. Aaron’s comments, in particular, show this to be true. Though he played the police constable, it was not having a larger role in the show that was the highlight for Aaron; rather, he explains that “The best part of the musical was

watching the different scenes until our turn came”. His comments are echoed by Tanya, who, as part of the student backstage crew, had many opportunities to watch her peers. She writes: “It’s fun to watch people sing and dance and watch how hard they worked to make a great performance...” Watching each other on stage during rehearsals, it seems, had an effect on the students – an effect that in several cases appears to have played a role in their desire to watch others beyond their peer group, too.

For some of the students, this enthusiasm for watching future productions was connected directly to their love of the arts. Lily, for example, notes that she “...love[s] singing, dancing, and acting[;] even if I am watching it I still enjoy it”. Her comment suggests that a transfer can exist between doing and watching. Lily finds intrinsic value in arts participation, and, it seems, she is able to also find this enjoyment through watching others. Penelope expands on this, with a comment that shows true empathy and understanding. She writes: “I think it’s great that everyone can experience an opportunity to make something beautiful”. This reflection shows altruism to a level rarely seen by a student so young; her words demonstrate the selflessness of a caring individual, an authentic artist, and a community-builder all in one. Penelope understands the importance of accessible art forms like the musical, for it is through arts such as these that everyone will have the chance to experience the beauty that is so often passed over in our busy world. Participating in a musical gives one the chance to experience this beauty first-hand, and opens one’s eyes to seek this beauty in the work of others.

As was the case with the younger students described in the previous chapter, many of the students who participated in this MYP musical were also interested in seeing other productions because they felt that they could learn from watching others. Tessa, for

example, recognized that “...people can get better and better at plays” and felt that watching others could contribute to improvement; she writes: “...I would like to watch them [to] get better”. Xavier explains more specifically why watching others could be helpful for young performing artists, noting that he “... could learn new ideas from what other people do”. This could be with regards to choreography, staging, or, as Madeline reminds us, the “different media techniques and styles” used for the sets. The significance here is that there are students who want to watch other productions because they see that they have value as learning experiences. Shannon, in fact, claims that such experiences can be an “inspiration ... because you learn and can apply that to your own performance”. Her words parallel the comments of Snider (1995) that “Part of being a successful performer is being a successful observer...” (p. 55).

Other students showed even greater insight in their comments, as they recognized the extent of learning that can occur from watching others perform. Bartholomew and Lucas, for example, both noted that one musical may have several “interpret[at]ions” and that watching different performances can allow you to “...to see how they [others] see the play, and how they put it together” (Lucas). These comments suggest that the students not only have an understanding that there are different visions for large-scale productions, but, even more importantly, an interest in viewing others’ visions. This indicates an appreciation for the work of others that is not too often seen in elementary school-aged children.

Some students recognized that it is not only important to watch other musical productions, but to be selective in doing so – particularly if one is looking to grow as an artist. Tina explains that she would see a future musical “...only if it’s a good play...”,

while Betty notes that "...a *good* musical is very interesting and you can learn from them" (my emphasis). While both comments are somewhat simplistic in their use of the word "good", they show that these students have at least a level of understanding that not all musicals are equal. This ability to recognize 'good' art from 'bad' art is all too often brushed over with younger students, and yet is such an important part of being an aware artist. In this way, involvement in the Beachview School musical appears to have promoted critical thinking skills that are so crucial to aesthetic understanding, much as was described by Snider (1995, p. 64).

Not all students expressed an interest in watching future productions. As was already discussed in an earlier section, one of the reasons for this was a desire on the part of some students to participate rather than watch. In some ways, this ego-centrism may be indicative of a lack of artistic growth, at least as far as viewing goes. Ian's comment that he would not like to watch other productions because he "...get[s] bored watching musicals" indicates no appreciation for the musical as an entity, nor any of the integrated arts which it includes. In this way, it suggests that Ian has not grown as an appreciator of music, acting, or dancing, at least as far as viewing musicals is concerned. Lack of growth in this area, however, does not preclude growth in other areas, such as arts participation. Ian, for example, learned "teamwork and dedication" as a result of his work in this school musical, and he would like to participate in future musicals. Might this desire to participate in additional performing arts experiences be enough in itself to indicate some level of artistic growth?

If so, it would appear that almost all students who took part in *Fiddler on the Roof* have grown as artists. In fact, 31 of the 37 grade six students who completed the

questionnaire indicated that they would like to participate in future musicals, while six indicated that they would not like to participate; similarly, 23 of 29 grade seven students responded positively, while five responded negatively and one was uncertain. Of these responses, many included comments which specifically demonstrated artistic growth. David, for example, is explicit in how his view of the performing arts has changed as a result of participating in this production. He writes: "... I am starting to like singing/acting/dancing more", and indicates that he would now like to take part in future musicals. Similarly, Tina would like to participate in other productions because she enjoyed "everything" about being a part of this show – a comment which suggests her appreciation for each of the performing arts that she experienced, as well as the musical as an artistic entity.

Betty, a grade six supporting cast member with learning disabilities, also valued this integrated arts experience. She explains that she would like to participate in future musicals "because they let me explore my fun and creative side, help me meet my fun need, and are a great way to learn new things and do new things". Her insights are very helpful in explaining how school musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof* can be valuable learning experiences for a variety of students, including those with special needs. Potentially, they encourage learning, expose students to new experiences, and promote creativity – all in a way that many students find "fun". At least, this was the case with this independent school musical for elementary students.

Manjeet, that very shy student we read about earlier in this chapter, agrees with Betty that this was a "fun" learning experience that she would like to replicate, and adds that she will "always remember" being a part of this musical. To use a rather-appropriate

cliché, these words are ‘music to the ears’ of teachers everywhere. They suggest that this has been a positive and authentic arts experience for Manjeet, one which has contributed to her growth as both an artist and a person. We have spent much time addressing this artistic growth, so let us now turn our attention to the latter issue, that of personal growth.

The Issue of Personal Growth

With regards to personal growth, questionnaire responses suggest that participating in this musical gave students a chance to learn about themselves, both as performing artists and as people. Uttara’s comment addresses this directly. Referring to her experience with the school musical, she writes: “...I learned many things about myself”. Neelja agrees with this, and expands on it by including specific descriptions of what exactly she learned about herself. She explains: “...I learned that I am more confident than I thought I was. I also learned more about acting, and singing. It also helped me learn and realize my passion for drama and music”. In this way, *Fiddler on the Roof* certainly seems to have contributed to her growth as an individual. Neelja has come to see that she does have the confidence to be herself, and the passion and artistic skills to celebrate that uniqueness that makes her who she is.

Many of the students wrote about the importance of having confidence. Betty recognized that “...you need to be confident and outgoing to be in a play...” While this may sound like she is suggesting that only confident people need audition to be a part of the show, context proves otherwise. Betty, like so many other Beachview students, gained confidence by *being in* this production. She was given the instruction she needed to hone her performance skills and was encouraged to believe in herself, just as the teacher directors believed in her; she was then put on stage where the confidence grew as

she saw that she *could* do her part, even in front of an audience. This was particularly evident for the leading characters. As Ophelia explains it, a certain “thrill” exists when you know that you “...hav[e] to perform in front of all those people...” because “...if you don’t have an understudy, there’s no backing out...” (her emphasis). Indeed, there were no understudies used in this production, which meant that all characters had to go on stage, even if they were feeling nervous, because the show depended on them. In this way, there was nowhere to go but forward, which meant that students like Kirsten, who played one of the daughters, Hodel, particularly blossomed. She explains it as follows: “I learnt a lot of self-confidence by singing and acting in front of a crowd...”; even better, as she grew in confidence, she enjoyed the experience immensely, describing it as “...the best time I had last year!”.

This sense of growing student confidence was more evident with each performance, as the joy of seeing themselves as capable performers replaced earlier student butterflies and uncertainty. Quinn’s comments are typical of this. She writes: “I learned that I could act and sing fine in front of an audience and I really wasn’t scared to [do so]”. Her presence on stage as the town’s meddling matchmaker, Yente, was evident that she *could*, indeed, “act and sing”. Quinn’s comment suggests that she did not always believe that she had this confidence to perform for so many people and yet she did, ultimately noting that “...It was enjoyable and I felt like I really contributed to it!” This sense of contribution to the group is of great importance for a person who is trying to buck the trend of just being another “passenger” in life (Senyshyn, 1999, p. 91). Indeed, a true individual looks to take initiative, rather than coasting along on the work of others.

The MYP musical at Beachview facilitated opportunities for this sort of leadership, as demonstrated by Heather, the grade seven student who was selected to be stage manager for the show. In her comments she explains that she learned “how to take charge of a situation and how to be a leader”. Leadership was evident in all that Heather did, from communicating with her peers to organizing props. Most positively, it gave a student who had previously had some challenges with organization a chance to shine and see herself in a new light. Heather noted that she “...enjoyed seeing [her] other strengths” – strengths that she didn’t even realize she had until the musical provided an opportunity for them to become evident.

Valarie appreciated the responsibility that students were given; indeed, this was her favourite part of participating in *Fiddler on the Roof*. She writes: “I think that what I most enjoyed about the play was the fact that even though adults were running it, we got to contribute ideas, and do things our own way”. At first, this may seem to promote individualism so much so that it goes against the advice of Engel (1983) in his warning that “Performers should always remember that they are part of a vast whole” (p. 125). In reality, however, this move away from adults as dictating directors to supportive facilitators was ideal for learning. It did not preclude the “discipline” that Engel insists is so “essential” in any theatrical production, but rather, encouraged true *self*-discipline on the part of each of the student participants.

Lily also appreciated the open-mindedness that the team of musical teachers/directors showed in listening to the ideas of students. She explains: “I liked the fact as well as being an actor we where [sic] able to put in an effort & ideas about where/how it was going to work”. In other words, Lily felt like she was not only

given the chance to follow direction as she acted, but also contribute to her characterization, the staging, and the show's overall vision. This did not mean that there were many visions working in contrast, as might be suspected; to the contrary, because of the input of students, they took ownership for a united vision of this production, all the while growing as individuals. They had a voice, and this empowered them both as actors and as people.

Many of the students felt this to be the case, and a few of those who didn't expressed regret not with the process, but with the fact that they had "...not tr[ie]d for a more active role" (York). Indeed, both York and Jill wished that they had larger parts in the production. Because they had not auditioned and their comments are not critical in tone, this desire to be a part of the main cast suggests most likely that they came to realize through the rehearsal process just how capable they were. They began to see themselves as true performing artists and recognized that they were individuals who had the courage to move beyond the crowds.

Despite this, however, not all student participants necessarily grew in their confidence as a result of this production. For example, while Lawson acknowledges that "...the musical was a great exp[er]ience [sic]...", he still does not want to take part in future musicals because of his "stage fright". This is not necessarily a result of being in the school musical, but his comments indicate that this experience did not lessen his fear of being on stage either. Similarly, Brandi commented that she least enjoyed singing and explained that "I'm not good [at it]"; she also commented that she would not like to participate in future shows because she is also "...not good at memorizing lines". The comments of both these students make it clear that they have not grown in confidence,

and suggest that, if anything, they have less confidence now than they did before their participation in the musical. At the same time, when one considers that both these students had supporting roles, it is doubtful that it was actually their time on stage or in rehearsals that damaged their self concepts; more likely, it is the auditions that are to blame here. In fact, both Lawson and Brandi stretched themselves to audition for leading roles in the show. Lawson was given a supporting role as the hat seller, a minimal part which had one line, while Brandi was not given a speaking part at all and was therefore, by default, a part of the supporting cast as a villager. While in theory both had the chance to grow as individuals through the experience of the audition, the reality is that being ‘unsuccessful’ in the auditions may actually have negatively affected how they see themselves as performing artists.

Related to this is the interesting comment of Wesley, a grade six student who had one of the leading roles in the production. Despite doing an excellent job on staging, describing the process as being positive, and expressing a desire to participate in future musicals, Wesley was somewhat critical of himself as an actor. He explains: “I learned that I’m not the best actor in the world so don’t act like one.” Does this show lack of confidence in his performance abilities? If it was only for the first part of his quote, one might assume that Wesley does not seem himself as a capable actor; the addition of “... so don’t act like one”, however, suggests that he has had a change in perspective as a result of participating in this musical. Wesley appears to have learned humility, a character trait that, like confidence, plays a role in shaping who one is. He has seen the acting skills that other students possess and now wants “... to get more experience [sic] as an actor” so that he, too, can continue to grow. This suggests new appreciation for the fact that

learning is an ongoing process, which shows maturity and a true desire to better one's self; this openness to improving is perhaps truly indicative of personal growth.

Ultimately, this school musical appears to have been a positive experience for most students. The comments of many include words such as those David uses to describe the performances – including “exciting”, “thrilling”, and “self pride”. Gurgot, for example, writes: “I most enjoyed singing in front of an audience because it made me feel good”. Feeling positive about educational activities that they are a part of is so important for students, and the arts can often provide these opportunities. Students feel proud when they work hard and see the results, as they did with this musical. This seems to be especially true when they believe that they have personally contributed something to the final product. This was the case here, as Ophelia felt “proud” to be a part of *Fiddler on the Roof* because “...it made [her] feel part of something”. While Ophelia was a part of the main cast, her comments seem to be also applicable to those students who had smaller, supporting roles. Manjeet, for example, writes: “I learned that I have ability to make a difference, even if it is by being a villager in a play”. Both girls obviously feel that by participating in the musical they have been a part of something special. It has not necessarily shaped them as human beings, but it has played a positive role in their life journey. They have learned from their participation and they have been inspired by it; they have grown as people because of it.

I now examine whether or not this MYP musical has strengthened the community to the extent that it has strengthened so many student participants.

The Issue of Community Building

As was the case with the students who participated in the musical described in the previous chapter, many of the students who took part in *Fiddler on the Roof* had comments to make about their experience of working with others. David explains very succinctly what the comments of several others suggest: "...in a musical, you must all work together, as a whole". For the musical to come together, everyone needed to do their part – and they did. This required "teamwork", which Gloria, Ian, and Mandy all claim to have learned through this experience. It was teamwork, which we shall now examine more specifically, that contributed to the building of community.

Fiddler on the Roof was a large-scale production, as musicals so often are. It involved over 130 students, and each of them had a part to play. While this may sound very cliché, it is more than rhetoric. If a student forgot to put a prop on stage, or someone was absent and the choreography needed to be modified, it was noticed – not just by the teachers, but by the students themselves. Uttara, for example, learned that "...not one person can do it [put on a musical] by there self [sic][;] you need a team to accomplish something so big..." This recognition that it is not about 'me', but about 'us' is a significant shift in perspective. Did the musical *cause* this shift in perspective? That cannot be proven. However, student comments such as Uttara's suggest that if nothing else, participating in this musical has given some of the students a chance to see first-hand that there are some things in life that require working with others and that cannot be accomplished without the contributions of many.

As they worked with others, students such as Asha came to understand that their peers could be teachers, too. She explains that she would like to participate in future

musicals not only because it is “fun”, but also because “...you can learn a lot...” both “...from the actual musical and from people...” Her comments show insight into the fact that working with others is not just about cooperation and tolerance, but about respect. Many of the students involved in *Fiddler on the Roof* demonstrated this respect for the contributions of their peers both in their actions and in their words. Indeed, Heather notes that her favourite part of this experience was “Getting to know other peoples [sic] strengths and being able to appreciate my peers for other reasons”. This appreciation for the talents of others is key as one works to build community, and the integrated nature of the musical makes it an ideal vehicle for showcasing these talents.

Because a school musical involves acting, singing, and dancing, there are many opportunities for different students to be leaders, with various students stepping into these leadership roles at different times, depending on their strengths. Uttara, for example, felt comfortable with the “dance moves” that she and her classmates were learning and enjoyed “...helping others when they didn’t understand the parts [the choreography] or what to do”. She was a leader here and demonstrated this leadership in her interactions with her peers by encouraging them and modeling steps for them that they may not have learned as quickly as she did. At the same time, Uttara did not have a main acting role nor was a particularly confident singer, which meant that other students had the chance to be leaders in these areas. Most of the students seemed to fall into this ebb and flow quite naturally. No one needed to be proclaimed the leader or the follower; rather, students generally stepped forward or back as mentors for their peers as they felt comfortable doing so. Tina found that this collegiality made things feel more comfortable than they might otherwise have been as she describes in the following example: “Memorizing the

songs was hard, but singing with everyone made it easier”. Her comment suggests that she feels supported by her classmates and that she appreciates having them by her side. And so we return to this word, “appreciate”, which the reader might remember was used by Heather in her comment a few paragraphs ago. Appreciation, it seems, can come from working closely with others, as was the case with this school musical.

But can this appreciation lead to the caring that was such an important part of our definition of community? Certainly, many of the students cared about the quality of the show, as was evident by the discussion about pride in the previous section. Aaron, however, puts a new slant on this by explaining that he “...love[d] being part of a group that really does a good job”. By valuing his participation in a group that set high standards and worked together to do “a good job”, Aaron is showing that he cares. He is not only proud of his accomplishments, but also proud of being a part of a group that has worked together for success. Greene (2001) suggests that as the arts provide opportunities for students to experience a shared “...feeling of what excellence is”, as Aaron did through this musical, community is strengthened (p. 145).

Brenna, another grade seven student, confirms that Aaron was not alone, either. She uses the word “beautiful” to describe the camaraderie that she experienced and notes that not only did “everyone work[] together”; they also “...showed that they cared about what they were doing...”. There is no doubt that most of the students did care about the musical and doing their best; they showed it in their commitment to rehearsals and their willingness to run scenes again and again. In this way, they were united as a team – and in this sense, they cared. Did they care enough about *each other*, however, to truly

warrant the term “community of caring” which was discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation (Noddings, 1984, p. 199)?

Reading further into the comments of Brenna, one may wonder. She confirms that like so many other students in this production, she “...learned teamwork”; however, she adds: “...I learned that even though I mostly sat, and stood, you need to work together...” Clearly, Brenna feels that her supporting cast role was not as important as that of some of her peers. While she worked exceptionally well with others and always did her part without complaining, her comments suggest that she did not feel as appreciated as some. This is confirmed by her comments related to her indecision as to whether or not she would like to participate in future productions. She notes: “...I like to act but just for fun. I think everyone could do it, just some people are scared or get intimidated by the people that are known as ‘the best singers’ or ‘the best actors’”. Her words here certainly suggest a lack of caring. While it appears that Brenna is somewhat jealous of certain classmates who may have larger roles than she does, it is not clear if she is the one who is ‘not caring’ by downplaying these individuals’ contributions – or if she is the one who is being ‘not cared for’ because of the attitudes and actions of those students who see themselves as being “the best”. Either way, the mutual caring that Noddings (1984) describes, and that is so important for our definition of community, appears to be lacking (p. 48).

It is interesting here to note that aside from being a part of the supporting cast, Brenna contributed greatly to the posters, programs, and sets. Similarly, grade six student Elyse helped paint the sets and was part of the backstage crew. She writes: “I didn’t like that us backstage people weren’t reconized [sic] very much...” As was the

case with Brenna, Elyse feels that the contributions of some students were more overtly celebrated than the contributions of others. While it was not evident that students or teachers were taking for granted the work of those ‘behind the scenes’ (and in many cases, made an apparent effort to acknowledge their fine work), the reality was that it was the main cast members who had the final bows and did receive much of the glory from the audience and other students at Beachview. This is understandable, because they were the ones most in the public eye – but it also causes one to reflect on the issue of community. Can a caring community truly exist when there is inequality, or perceptions of inequality, amongst individuals? Can it exist when hard feelings do, too?

It can be acknowledged that working together so closely with one another, particularly with the very real pressures of putting together a show in a limited amount of time, meant that people were not always at their best. There were sometimes hard feelings, just as there were times where students would become impatient with each other. Tindel notes that he least liked it when “...sometimes people yelled...”. While I did not observe this behaviour on the part of either students or teachers, it is fair to say that students would raise their voices with each other when they were feeling frustrated. This was especially true as the final rehearsals with the blocking of large scenes and the finale were run, for in these cases there were anywhere from forty to more than one hundred students on stage.

Tindel himself recognized, however, that these moments of indiscretion did not mean that cast mates did not like each other – nor did he indicate that he felt uncomfortable with working with his peers. To the contrary, he described “...being as a group...” as his favourite part of the musical and noted that he learned “...that you can

forge bonds with other people...” when you work so closely with them. In this way, it could be argued that students did grow closer to each other, not in spite of their challenges with each other, but perhaps, *because* of them. As Ophelia astutely explains this: “...it is such a good experience for everyone ... to be able to go through the same intense experience together...”; she further notes how, rather than tearing people apart, she found that the musical resulted in feelings of “bonding” and “togetherness”. Louis, who played the leading role in this production, agrees. Specifically, he commented on the fact that “...you get to know who your [sic] working with a lot better” during rehearsals. This is most likely because of how closely, and regularly, everyone works together. Yes, this means that students don’t always see the best side of one another, but, as is the case within a family, this openness is what makes for authentic relationships.

As the students worked with each other, they scratched past the superficial surfaces of acquaintances to the core of true friendship. Both Philip and Wesley, two students who had roles in the main cast, recognized this. Philip writes: “I most enjoyed ... making new friends I wouldn’t have, if I didn’t try out for the play”. This is interesting, for most of Philip’s friends did not audition for the musical, and it was very evident that his circle of friends did expand as the musical progressed. He ended up developing friendships with students quite unlike his other friends, and yet, at least from a distance, these relationships appeared to be just as strong. Like Philip, making new friends was also Wesley’s favourite part of participating in this musical. He notes that it wasn’t just about making connections that stayed at rehearsals, either; to the contrary, he appreciated how these were true friendships, where even when the acting was finished, you were “...hanging out with them”. More than anything else, it is these new friendships

that show that new bonds were, indeed, forged by participants in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

These students – some of whom would have had nothing to do with each other were it not for their participation in this musical – now cared for each other enough to become friends. This appears to indicate that, despite challenges along the way and possible discrepancies, a “community of caring” (Noddings, 1984, p. 199) was built within the cast.

As can often be the case when caring is involved, the comments by some students suggest that this sense of community also rippled outwards. Gloria notes that she most enjoyed “performing in front of [her] parents”. As was the case with *Once Upon a Tale*, many of the students appeared very excited to see their loved ones in the audience. Parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives filled the audience for each performance, as did family friends and neighbours. Again, this included the senior citizens from one of the local care facilities, Happyville Manor. The comments of audience members, as well as their thunderous applause, suggest that most everyone seemed to be positively impacted by the energy that the students displayed on stage. The students noticed this, too. Edgar writes: “I especially liked acting and putting a smile on peoples [sic] faces”. His comment suggests not only that he noticed the smiles in the audience, but more importantly, that it gave him pleasure to make others happy. This is indicative of true caring.

It seems that the independent school community that is Beachview was strengthened at some level because of a musical. The students cared about doing their best and most, at least, also cared for each other. Friendships developed as the cast worked closely together and came to appreciate one another, both for their strengths and

in spite of their weaknesses. This sense of caring was felt by participants and audience alike, ultimately contributing to what Penelope describes as a “... positive atmosphere that was everywhere and within everyone”. This is true community.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine if an elementary school musical could serve as an authentic, integrated performing arts experience for students. More specifically, I wished to determine what benefits might come from a musical production, both to the student participants as individuals and to the independent school community as a whole. Through the examination of the two case studies presented in the preceding chapters, each of which has been supported by careful analysis of student questionnaire responses, it is evident that both *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof* were authentic, integrated performing arts experiences for the majority of the participating students at Beachview Junior School.

I now revisit each of the sub-headings presented in chapters three and four, as I seek to draw more specific conclusions, offer recommendations, and suggest implications for future research. Hopefully this will allow me to make broader generalizations about what possible benefits may come to participants in elementary school musicals beyond the walls of Beachview, as well as their larger communities.

The Choice of Musical

The case studies presented in the previous chapters indicate that both musicals written specifically for students at a particular school and pre-written *Broadway Junior* versions of familiar musicals are possible options for production at the elementary school level, assuming that the individual needs of students are taken into account to ensure that the experience is educational and positive for students. If the musical is too easy, the experience will not be enjoyable for students, as the comments of Theo in chapter three

remind us. The reader will remember that he found the musical to be “a waste of time” because it was, in his opinion, “super kidish [sic]”. By the same measure, if the musical is too difficult, there will not be opportunity for true learning because all energy will need to go into getting the show ‘performance-ready’, which has long been a concern of musical theatre critics. In this case, the entire process of working on the musical might also be frustrating for students and teachers alike. This was not the case for the vast majority of student participants with either *Once Upon a Tale* or *Fiddler on the Roof*. Because each of these musicals was chosen with specific attention to the needs of both the participating students and the values of the larger school community, they were authentic choices. Each seems to have met most of the students’ needs as performing artists by giving them the opportunity to participate in an integrated arts experience that was appropriate for them based on their ages and abilities.

With this in mind, it is recommended that great care be given to choosing a musical that will not only be enjoyable, but even more importantly, educationally sound. Specifically, it is suggested that teachers of younger elementary school-aged students consider writing their own musicals or have musicals written for their students by those who know them well. This is also an option for older elementary school students, although it is recommended that *Broadway Junior* scores also be consulted in this instance, for these scripts appear to offer intermediate-aged students the best opportunity for a truly authentic and meaningful musical experience.

The ‘Audition’ Process

While auditioning is a very real part of a professional musical or stage show, and so its inclusion in a school musical is ‘authentic’ in that sense, it is debatable whether or

not holding auditions contributes to a truly authentic, integrated performing arts experience for students. In my definition of ‘authentic’ from chapter one, I noted the importance of balance between head and heart as students engage in significant experiences which contribute to “...expanding [their] consciousness, shaping [their] dispositions, [and] satisfying [their] quest for meaning...” (Eisner, 2002, p. 3). Far more than being a 'realistic' copy of what professionals may experience, it is these attributes that make an artistic experience genuinely authentic for students. In this sense, it can be seen how auditions can potentially either contribute to, or detract from, authenticity.

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, formal auditions were held and only select students were cast, with the thought being that this would reward those students who worked hard to earn a part, while also teaching those who were not successful about the reality of the world of the performing arts, where so often competition is involved. This perspective echoes Janicki’s (1982) philosophy that it is “unfair” to cast everyone in a school stage production if they have not earned a part (p. 30). As we read in chapter four, however, while this is fine in theory, in practice it led to some extra pressures, hurt feelings, and confirmation on the parts of some students (such as Tanya) that they are not “good” performing artists. When one considers that the auditions for this production were held with careful attention to both the process and its impact on students, it seems that auditioning young students, even those in the upper intermediate grades, is not ideal. While their heads may understand the reality of not getting a main part in the show because of the number and talent base of auditioning students, their hearts at that age may not; this has the potential to negatively affect both individual self concepts and the larger community.

By contrast, no auditions were held for the production described in chapter three, *Once Upon a Tale*. This was an intentional decision because of the young age of the students, as was explained, and parallels the philosophy of Ross and Durgin (1983), two educators who have been directly involved with many elementary school musicals and believe that all students who express interest in participating in a production should be given a part (p. 33). While at first this may seem inauthentic and potentially even unfair to those especially-deserving students, we must remember that when this approach was taken at Beachview, students were encouraged to think with their heads and feel with their hearts as they indicated which roles they felt were the best fit for them. (See Appendix C.) In this way, the experience was authentic in its requirement of personal awareness of one's self as a performing artist. It required students to "expand [their] consciousness" (Eisner, 2002, p. 3) and think as artists, while at the same time giving the team of teacher-directors much of the same casting power that they had when the formal auditions were held the previous year. The teachers could still use their background knowledge of the students' artistic strengths and areas for growth to assign parts, but were able to do so in a way that honoured each of the students and respected the level of involvement that they wished to have in the show. Student confidence was promoted and a feeling of personal responsibility on the part of participants was created; in this way, both individual and community benefited.

There is no reason to suspect that the same would not also be true of older elementary school students, and it is therefore recommended that this audition-less 'audition' process be tried for future elementary school musical productions, regardless of whether the participants are primary or intermediate-aged students. Such a process is

suggested because of its encouragement of active student involvement and promotion of artistic engagement right from the onset of the musical, which helps to promote what is truly an authentic arts experience for all participants. The audition process might also serve as a potential area for future research, as the lack of formal auditions on an upper elementary school musical production is monitored – and perhaps even compared to a production where formal auditions are held.

The Rehearsals

For most participants in both case studies described in this dissertation, the least positive part of their musical experience was the rehearsals. Specifically, students disliked the repetitive nature of the rehearsals. In particular, students who had supporting cast roles found the rehearsals to be tedious, with some using words such as “boring” (Vi, chapter four) and “a waste of time” (Theo, chapter three) to describe the process. Many students in *Once Upon a Tale* were especially critical of having to sit around and wait during their lunch hours while parts of scenes that they were not even involved with were run through with a fine-tooth comb. Similarly, some students in *Fiddler on the Roof* complained of regular in-school rehearsals where classes were interrupted so that scenes could be run several times over.

Interestingly, most students spoke very highly of the quality of the final performances, with some even recognizing that this was a result of the many intense practices that were undertaken. Eliminating or cutting rehearsals is not an option if it is important to the students that show quality is maintained. It is the opinion of this author that rehearsals are a very important part of staging a school musical, for this is where much of the learning takes place and where individuals have a chance to realize just how

capable they are; it is also where the groundwork is laid for the building of community, as students come to know each other at a deeper level of appreciation as they work to put the show together. It is therefore recommended that the number of rehearsals not be reduced, but rather, that great care be taken so that these rehearsals are as meaningful as possible for *all* participants. Members of the supporting cast must be made to feel that their contributions truly are valued, and this means that attention should be taken when planning each rehearsal so that it is known exactly what their role will be. If these students are needed to work on singing, dancing, or blocking, they should be required to attend, but if they are not, they should be excused. When they do attend, they should be clearly instructed not only as to what they are to do, but as to why their part matters; they must be supported and made to feel, as Manjeet (chapter four) did, that they are “mak[ing] a difference” not only to the quality of the show, but also to the ‘team’ that is the cast. When they are unable to attend rehearsals (due to illness, for example, as was the case with Gloria in the previous chapter), their absence must be noted and acknowledged by the teacher-directors at the next rehearsal, just as would be the case for main cast members. If they have missed new steps, care should be taken to pair them with a student who can help them catch up and feel confident once again. In this way, all students should feel that they are an important part of the cast community, and the integrity of the show will also be maintained.

If possible, students with both major and smaller roles should also be given the opportunity to offer their suggestions with regards to choreography or blocking, as was described with dance sequences in both the PYP and MYP musicals in this dissertation. Indeed, for many of the students, it was these rehearsals that were most meaningful. It

was when they were required to be critical, thinking artists, rather than performing ‘puppets’, that students were participating in an authentic art experience as true individuals. At the same time, it is acknowledged that when working with a tight timeline, as was the case with the two musical case studies described in the preceding chapters, there is only so much time for student input. For this reason, it seems appropriate that rehearsals at the very beginning and end of the musical process (i.e. the initial read-throughs, the first few vocal rehearsals, and the final blocking and dress rehearsals) should be directed exclusively by the musical team of teachers so that time is best used, student participants are respected, and artistic integrity is maintained.

With regards to time, it is also important that rehearsals be kept to no more than one hour as advised by Ross and Durgin (1983) who believe that these shorter rehearsals promote maximum learning (p. 23). From observations of the two Beachview productions, it was evident that students were more attentive and positive when rehearsals were of limited length; by contrast, more frustrations (as evident by some of the student comments in chapter four) came to light during the longer rehearsals, most of which occurred as the looming deadline of the upcoming performances approached. In this same regard, it is important that rehearsals do not run beyond their original schedules, nor additional rehearsals be added beyond what has been agreed to by the students in their signed commitment contracts. To ensure that this is possible, the teacher-directors should err on the side of including additional rehearsals from the onset – and then take away these practices as/if it is deemed that they are not necessary. Morale might then be kept high, which has the potential to increase both student focus and learning.

When planning rehearsals for the younger students, minimal lunch hour rehearsals should be used because these recess times are, for many, the only time during the school day to play with friends and run-off any built-up energy. As the comments from chapter three suggest, this was especially important to many of the boys in *Once Upon a Tale*. Because some lunch time rehearsals will still be required, great care should be taken to involve only those students who are truly needed. No students should be sitting around waiting for their parts, unless they will be needed momentarily. If this is not the case, they should be given the chance to play outside, with the expectation that they will be called as needed via the school intercom or a willing runner. Even more ideally, lunch hour rehearsals for younger students might be broken into smaller time segments of no more than twenty minutes, with different songs or scenes scheduled for each segment. This would help to reduce the potential for mundane-ness, which is the anti-thesis of the authentic lived experience that each rehearsal should strive to be.

For the older students, out-of-school rehearsals should also be carefully planned so that the valuable time of all student participants is fully respected. Most importantly, limited time should be taken from other subject areas for musical rehearsals. Based on student feedback from chapter four, it is recognized that these interfering rehearsals may be seen as either a ‘break’ from work or as a contributor to additional homework time. The first of these is not ideal as it may lessen the value of the arts in the minds of some students, particularly those who equate ‘wasted time’ with subject matter that is less valuable than the ‘busy’ subjects; the latter of these is a problem because it increases the burden on students who already have many pressures in their lives. In both cases, these additional rehearsals were noticed by students and comments were made that suggest

that, at least for some, these rehearsals may affect their participation in future productions. (For example, as was discussed in chapter four, Hilary indicated that although the musical was a very positive experience for her, she would not like to participate in future productions because of the work that she had to catch up on from her missed classes.) Because of student feedback in this area, adjustments have been made to the way that future MYP rehearsals are handled at Beachview School. In the 2009 production of *The Music Man*, for example, students were pulled from class much less frequently than was the case in *Fiddler on the Roof*, with multi-class rehearsals only occurring two weeks before the performances and the pulling of main cast members occurring very rarely, and even then only in the final week of rehearsals. This took additional planning on the part of the musical team, but it was worth it to see students who clearly felt less overwhelmed than they otherwise would have. In this way, greater balance was achieved for individual participants and the school community as a whole.

The Issue of Arts Integration

Based on both student perception and my definition in the first chapter of this dissertation, there can be little question that *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof* were 'integrated arts experiences'. This was the case for all participants, as each student was involved with at least two of the arts, be that the performing arts of music, drama, dance, or visual art (such as painting the sets). As was revealed in the previous chapters, most students recognized that they had participated in a variety of the arts, which suggests that the exposure was significant enough to be evident to participants. Similarly, in both productions, it was observed that the arts seemed to fit together very naturally, with the performing arts in particular “intertwin[ing] and intermix[ing]” to

“become unified as one”, as per our definition in the first chapter. Most importantly, as acting connected the various classroom songs in *Once Upon a Tale*, and dance propelled the storyline forward in *Fiddler on the Roof*, each of the arts still maintained “artistic integrity” (chapter one). This is crucial with regards to the research question of this dissertation, for if the arts themselves were compromised in any way, the overall experience would be compromised, too – and the musical would lose its authenticity.

Fortunately, this was not the case. As was discussed, each of the productions at Beachview was carefully chosen to meet the needs of the student participants. The music was deemed to be both educational and enjoyable, and the scripts were determined to be at an appropriate level for the students so that optimal learning could take place. While there was only one true dance number (“Sunshine Vitamin”) in the production for the younger students, all songs provided natural opportunities for age-appropriate actions and movements. Similarly, in the MYP musical, the older students were exposed to choreography that was both accessible and a good fit with the music. In this way, each musical was what Kefgan (1981) describes as being the ideal musical: “. . .the one complete performance opportunity. . .” (p. 12). To be more specific, each production exposed students to the worlds of drama and dance, two of the art forms that are all too often ignored in elementary school. Yes, this exposure was limited, as grade seven student Brenna reminded us with her description of being “sort of” involved with these performing arts, but it existed nonetheless. Without the musicals, this would not have been the case, and some students would have missed out on being introduced to these arts completely.

The question that comes to the forefront, then, is whether or not this exposure is a positive thing. For most of the students, the answer appears to be a definite “yes”. After all, the reader will remember that students such as David now realize how much they enjoy the performing arts and have expressed a desire to participate in future artistic endeavours of this sort. At the same time, there are students who did not like the integrated arts experience at all. For example, Dylan, whose feedback was analysed in the previous chapter, did not enjoy singing and dancing, and resented being made to do so. His comments remind us that while there is much to celebrate about arts integration, this combining of the arts is not appreciated by everyone. Yes, the connection of the various arts in a musical can expose students to new opportunities that they might have otherwise not realized – but in some cases, this integration may actually reinforce their dissatisfaction with a particular art or discourage them from taking part at all. This is certainly something that we, as educators, must be aware of as we undertake an integrated arts experience such as a musical. Throughout the school year, we must also offer other performing arts experiences that highlight the various arts independently to provide balance for those students who do not appreciate the integrated nature of the musical.

The Issue of Entertainment

The issue of entertainment was included in this analysis of musicals because there are those who believe that the arts lose their authenticity when they are not done for their own sake. Many have cringed at the pairing of arts and entertainment, and critics of school musicals worry that in producing an entertaining show, student learning may be made secondary. This is particularly a concern because of the very real pressures on schools – particularly independent schools – to cater to parents and others. There are

many who worry about the musical becoming “a public relations gimmick”, as was discussed in chapter two (Skaggs, 1966, p. 149).

Because of the very involved parental community at Beachview School, this is indeed a risk. The expectation from parents is that there will be a spring musical each year, and that it will be of very high quality. This in itself does not reduce the authenticity of the musical experience for the students. Not one student in either of the case studies mentioned feeling any pressure from their parents, nor any pressure from the teacher-directors, to improve the quality of the show. If public relations were a concern and producing an entertaining show was the main reason for undertaking a school musical, then it is very likely that these pressures would have been evident to at least some participants and reported in their questionnaire responses. This did not happen, which indicates that the resulting shows for *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof* were not put above the learning process by the teachers; in both cases, this balance between process and product was confirmed by ongoing participant observations. In this way, it could be argued that there is nothing wrong with high expectations from parents for an entertaining musical production, so long as this show comes about through a meaningful artistic process. In the two Beachview School musicals that are the subject of this dissertation, this was the case.

A bigger issue connected with entertainment that came to the forefront through these two case studies was that of students desiring to be the ‘stars’ of the show, as indicated by several comments on the questionnaire. Indeed, this ‘star-syndrome’ was apparent in responses from students in grade four, six, and seven, including Bob (grade four) who “...really enjoy[ed] being [the] center of attention” and Kaylee (grade seven)

who also “... love[d] to be in front of a crowd ...[and] love[d] to be the focus of attention”. While it is beyond the scope of this study to determine if students such as Bob and Kaylee increased their love of the spotlight as a result of being in a school musical production, it is reasonable to conclude that their participation has, at minimum, affirmed their desire to be entertainers. The positive side of this affirmation is that these students will most likely pursue further arts experiences that emphasize performing. The concern, however, is that if the musical is seen by some as a chance to be the “center of attention”, others seem to be precluded; in this sense, community has the potential to be weakened rather than strengthened. This did not seem to be the case at Beachview, as we will see later in this chapter, but it is a risk of which educators must be aware. Ideally, future studies will look more directly at the potential positive and negative effects of ‘stardom’ on students, as well as the role that participating in school musicals might play in this regard.

Connected to the matter of students being star entertainers is the issue of students being entertained. As the reader will remember, many comments from those participating in both the PYP and MYP musicals at Beachview School included the word “fun” to describe various parts of the musical experience. This may be a concern to some, for it seems to imply a lack of discipline or even artistic integrity. To the contrary, however, the use of humour by the directors and the friendly, supportive tone of the rehearsals did not detract from student learning – but rather, contributed to it. Students worked extra-hard because they enjoyed what they were doing, indicating that a musical is an ideal performing arts experience for a “light-hearted place of serious purpose” such as Beachview (no reference given to protect anonymity of school and students). Almost

all of the students who completed questionnaires were able to identify something positive that they had learned about themselves, their community, or the performing arts as a result of their involvement in the musical. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that making the arts “accessible”, as per the advice of Jorgensen (2003, p. 88), has not hindered the learning of musical participants at Beachview School, but has, in fact, enhanced it.

With regards to the issue of entertainment and school musicals, it is recommended that teachers always put student learning first by creating experiences that are both educational and enjoyable for their students. For some students, this means having the chance to play some drama games that will enhance their acting skills; for others, it means having the chance to feel like a star when they are on stage. For the most part, the students described in these case studies were engaged learners because of their participation in such activities, as their comments have indicated. They worked with pride to produce a show that was both entertaining and of high quality, suggesting that having fun throughout the artistic process need not preclude creating valuable art. In this way, it seems reasonable to conclude that the ideal approach to a school musical is one which balances education with entertainment. This, indeed, is an authentic performing arts experience for students.

I now turn my attention to the specific ways in which it is so.

The Issue of Aesthetic Awareness and Artistic Skills Growth

In chapters three and four, I reported that teaching and learning went hand-in-hand throughout the musical process of *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Based on both observation and student commentary, evidence was provided that many

students grew as performing artists and as thinking artists, not in spite of the musical but *because* of it. As has been described, the integrated nature of the musical has the potential to offer students an authentic performing arts experience. For optimal artistic skill development, however, the student participants in both productions were also given direct instruction in acting, dancing, and music. This approach, which answers the concerns of critics such as Binnema (1996, pp. 109, 110), is recommended for all elementary schools undertaking musical productions, for it ensures that each of the performing arts is given the time and attention it deserves. We presently examine each of these arts to determine in what ways this was made possible.

Acting

While drama finds its way into some elementary school classrooms in the form of such things as skits or improvisational activities, not all children of this age have the opportunity to work with a script to learn a formal part in a play. The students described in the case studies that are featured in this dissertation were fortunate to have this experience, for it allowed them to grow as actors by learning and practicing skills in context.

Several students, such as Hamish and Gwen in the PYP production and Bartholomew and Brandi in the MYP production, indicated that they learned how to act as a result of their work in their particular musical. While this is perhaps overly complimentary on the part of the students, it is unquestionable that many students, like Hilary in *Fiddler on the Roof*, saw their acting skills grow because of their participation with the Beachview musicals. It is reasonable to surmise that this occurred for a couple of reasons. As has been explained, the musicals were carefully chosen by the musical

directing team for their age-appropriateness. This meant that the teachers involved were able to use the musical as the vehicle for delivering instruction that met the developmental needs of the learners. The focus could then be on different skill areas in each production, with the younger PYP students working on such acting basics as enunciation and vocal projection, while the older MYP students addressed more advanced skills such as blocking and connecting with the audience through effective verbal and non-verbal communication. Students themselves recognized this learning and commented upon it in their questionnaire responses, suggesting that the learning was both authentic and accessible.

While some claim that script-based theatre can be restrictive in its opportunities for personal expression, this was not evident in the Beachview productions. To the contrary, students in both musicals commented that they learned how to express themselves effectively on stage because of their experience. I believe that this is because of the focus that was placed on characterization, not just for main cast members, but for all student participants. Every student in both *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, whether or not they had a speaking part, was asked to think about their character and consider such factors as age, personality type, and relationship with others; they were then encouraged to always keep this persona in mind whenever they were on stage. This was made easier by the more stereotypical characters that are often found in musicals. The students were able to ‘recognize’ these archetypes and then take on these roles with confidence. In fact, for many students this was perhaps a less daunting activity than if they had been asked to come up with their own character with no parameters. The

musical provided the framework and the context, and the students were then able to add their creativity to bring the characters to life.

Throughout the musical process, student learning was enhanced by clear teacher instruction, supporting activities and drama games that would contribute to skill building, and in the case of the PYP production, expert support. Having professional actor and educator Patti Allan come and work with the younger students was ideal – both because she had acting expertise to contribute that was beyond that of the teacher-directors and because she was able to serve as a role model for the students. While student questionnaire responses did not directly indicate that working with Patti had been a highlight of the musical experience, their comments about learned acting skills can be attributed, in large part, to her work with them. It is my belief that her participation contributed greatly to student learning by providing participants right from the onset with a ‘toolkit’ of basic skills that they could use throughout the rehearsal process. I would strongly recommend that elementary schools undertaking musical productions invest in an actor-led workshop for their students, for this truly helped to authenticate the acting experience for those at Beachview.

Dancing

Dancing is the art form that is perhaps most under-represented in the average elementary school classroom. Whether it is because teachers don’t feel that they have the expertise to teach dance or they worry that their students will not respond positively to it, it seems that dance is often relegated to a quick mini-unit in PE class. This is one of the strengths of producing a musical in an elementary school: it brings dance to the forefront, as we have seen was the case at Beachview School.

Because the students involved in *Once Upon a Tale* were quite young, the choreography was generally restricted to simple movements or actions that supported the music. This was positive, in that it acknowledges the natural connection between movement and music that has been occurring in western music for over 2000 years (Wilson, 1994, p. 209) and in many other cultures for far longer (Paynter and Paynter, 1974, p. 9). The younger students seemed to quickly and enthusiastically learn their movements, which fit seamlessly with the music. Because students were placed on risers on the stage so that they could be easily seen by their parents, however, larger movements such as sashays were not possible in the full class numbers. In some ways, it could be argued that this restricted movement detracted from a truly authentic dance experience for these younger students – and, as such, it is recommended that stage configuration be carefully considered for future productions.

For the select group of “Sunshine Vitamin” dancers in this PYP musical, and all grade six and seven students in the MYP musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, full dance opportunities were provided. To make these dance experiences as educationally-rich as possible, student input to choreography was both welcomed and encouraged, as was discussed in chapters three and four. This gave students a voice, arguably empowering individual participants and contributing to the artistic authenticity of the experience. Surprisingly, while observation of student participants suggested that many enjoyed this opportunity to create and were able to work successfully as a team to learn this choreography, none of the grade four students and very few of the older students commented about the dance rehearsals. One of the MYP students, Twyla, did write that she enjoyed the process of “mak[ing] up dance moves with the teacher...” and a handful

of other students from both productions (Kim, Shayleen, Wesley, and Shannon) did indicate that they had learned some new steps as a result of this experience, but most students did not comment about learning in this area at all. This lack of participant response need not lead us to conclude that learning did not occur (for watching the students on stage it was evident that, at minimum, they had learned the dances for the show), but rather, that the learning experience could have been improved and made more memorable for the students. This could have been done by hiring a professional dancer to offer a one-day student workshop so that students would have a collection of basic moves to work from as they helped with the choreography, as well as the inspiration to put these dance moves into action. Students might also have been given the opportunity to watch different choreographed versions of the same dance number (on a website such as *You Tube*) so that they would see a sampling of possible interpretations and reflect on what 'works'. The latter of these was undertaken with the subsequent MYP music production at Beachview, *The Music Man* (spring 2009), and proved to be successful not only in promoting authentic dance education, but also in encouraging critical artistic thinking amongst students.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that there were many positives with regards to dance in the case studies described in this dissertation. First and foremost, it worked well introducing students to the music before attempting to add the element of dance so that neither art form was 'brushed over', but given the full attention it deserved. Just as importantly, a safe learning environment was created where students could take part in dance without feeling that they would be teased and where, hopefully, there would be limited feelings of embarrassment. Particular attention was paid to avoiding any

potentially uncomfortable movements such as hand-holding or lifts in all dances, and, in the case of *Fiddler on the Roof*, including a separate dance for each gender that would allow the students to dance without worries about the watchful eyes of their opposite-gender peers. Same-gender dances were deemed to be particularly important when working with adolescent boys because of the unfortunate stereotype that still exists that dancing is ‘for girls’, and by observation, seemed to work well. Much of the usual silliness and stand-off-ishness that the author has observed in other dance situations with students of this age was not evident.

Despite this, the reader will remember the not-so-positive comments from a few grade six and seven boys that were discussed in the previous chapter. There was Charlie, who “...didn’t enjoy singing and dancing in front of others”, and Dylan, who called the rehearsals “lame... [and] unenjoyable [sic]” – and, of course, there was Donny, whose favourite part of *Fiddler on the Roof* was the end of the show's run. These comments lead to the conclusion that no matter how carefully we, as arts educators, frame the experience, there is no guarantee that exposing students to art forms previously unknown to them will truly welcome them to the canon. To the contrary, it is possible that required dance participation may actually further some students’ negative feelings towards this art form, which re-introduces a very important question considered earlier in this dissertation: Does requiring all to participate in dances increase confidence and offer exposure to a new art form, or, in some cases, does it reinforce existing stereotypes and feelings? This is certainly an area for further research, which will require the sampling of students involved with a production such as a musical before, during, and after their experience.

Fortunately, until this research occurs, we can contemplate this question with the additional knowledge that many of the Beachview students enjoyed working on the choreography, including at least one male student who overtly acknowledged this in his questionnaire response. Grade six student Wentworth most enjoyed "...singing and dancing to the first song in the play" which is very important to our conclusions because it reminds us that while not all students may be impacted by all the arts, *someone* always will be. If Wentworth had not been required to participate in this musical dance, it is quite possible that he may never have realized the joy that it could bring to his life. Because of his participation in a musical, he now knows – and this will be with him forever. He enjoyed the experience so much that he looks forward to participating in future productions. It has enhanced his life, both as a performer and as a person, arguably making him a more complete individual. This leads to the recommendation that all students be required to try the various performing arts that contribute to the musical, for we never know which ones will speak to which people.

Music

While some may question the learning that can take place by using the school musical as the vehicle for student instruction in music, the case studies at Beachview School have shown that both knowledge and skills can be enhanced through this educational approach. Grade six student Chad recognized that there was "a lot" to learn about music from the musical, and the comments from other students suggest that they were also aware of this fact.

Specifically, the Beachview productions demonstrate how, when carefully selected, the musical can be ideal for introducing students to a variety of musical genres.

This was particularly evident from the PYP production, which was specifically written with this in mind. Similarly, both *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof* included music that was enjoyable for students to sing, making the catchy melodies accessible for students. At the same time, the music from these productions was educationally sound and developmentally appropriate, with vocal ranges that were reasonable for all participants, including adolescent boys with changing voices. This is confirmed by no observation of vocal strain at rehearsals and the fact that no student commented about finding the vocal parts too high; it speaks to the importance of teacher-directors modifying parts as needed, as advised by Bobetsky (2005, p. 36) and as undertaken with grade seven student David's number in the second case study.

The approach to learning the music itself was quite effective in the Beachview examples. While rote teaching was used to learn the melodies of the vocal selections, this was balanced with careful attention to such foundational skills as proper breathing. Proper vocal care, including an emphasis on projection without straining, was also emphasized, with the understanding that while learning the songs for the show was important, it was not the be-all and end-all. This approach seemed to strike the right balance of ensuring that students learned many of the skills required to be safe and confident singers, while also growing in their understanding of what is required to effectively communicate a message through a song. Memorizing words was important, yes, but so was singing with expression. Because the students were in-character, they were willing to sing as such. From the detectives in *Once Upon a Tale* to the sisters and village girls in the "Matchmaker" number of *Fiddler on the Roof*, they demonstrated much success at singing with meaning and singing with heart. The words were not just

recalled lyrics, but words that had significance to the advancing storyline of each show. Similarly, the context of performing allowed for relevant discussions about such issues as the importance of diction, and the group ensembles made talks of vocal blending and tone have purpose.

It is perhaps not surprising that there were students, particularly those with larger singing roles, who both "...liked the music and how we learnt it" (Rose). As we have seen in the previous two chapters, many of them had positive things to say about their enjoyment with the singing rehearsals, as well as the new vocal skills they felt that they acquired as a result of these rehearsals; this was the case for both new singers, such as grade four student Ronny, and experienced singers, such as grade six student Hilary. None of these students, boys or girls, had anything negative to say about their experience with learning the music. One might conclude that a balanced approach to teaching singing, which uses some vocal repetition (rote learning) in harmony with more advanced musical concepts, is an effective way to approach the vocal selections with student soloists in an elementary school musical so that their musical experience might be both educational and authentic.

The same is not necessarily true for supporting cast members. While none of the grade four students identified in the third chapter expressed any negative commentary about their experience with learning the music for *Once Upon a Tale*, a few supporting cast members from *Fiddler on the Roof* did so. In particular, the reader will remember Konrad who disliked "all of the rehearsals and the singing" and Andy, who commented that he learned that he is "...not good at singing" as a result of his work with the musical. Comments such as these raise a red flag because they suggest that the experience of at

least some supporting cast members was not as positive as that of the leading vocalists. This leads one to question whether this apparent difference in student learning was student perception, enhanced by one's existing feelings about singing, or reality.

Grade seven student Brenna certainly believes that the latter is the case, pointing as proof to the individual teacher attention given to those students who had solos – an observation also made by this author. Such one-on-one attention would have been more beneficial in the development of singing technique than the general advice given to the supporting cast. It is also recognized that while the supporting cast was given copies of lyrics to review at home, the soloists were given such additional support materials as copies of the script/libretto (vocal score) so that they could study the movement of the melody as they practiced their parts. It is acknowledged that main cast members had more tangible support to grow as singers than supporting cast members, perhaps suggesting to some that the musical might actually contribute to a two-tier system of music education for students. Future studies in this area would be beneficial, with particular attention paid to the musical growth of those students with solos as compared to those students who are part of the larger chorus.

Because these studies are not yet available, I ask the reader to recall the positive comments about vocal learning provided by non-soloists Michelle (grade four) and Uttara (grade six) as proof that at least some supporting cast members felt that they had grown as musicians as a result of their part in the Beachview productions. I propose that the same support systems for learning should be made available to all musical participants. For optimal growth in note reading, it is recommended that all musical participants, regardless of role, should be provided with a melodic vocal score for those songs that

they are singing. It is advised that all students be encouraged to seek extra help if they are not sure of their vocal parts or desire additional one-on-one instruction. Supporting cast members might also be invited to attend optional lunch hour rehearsals for further singing practice, if desired – although this may prove to be unrealistic due to time constraints on both the part of teachers and students.

If the recommendations above are heeded, it is the opinion of this author that singing in an elementary musical can be a positive learning experience – and an authentic arts experience – for *all* student participants.

Arts Appreciation and Understanding

While critics such as Grote (1981) have been sceptical about the ability of the musical to educate students aesthetically, the two experiences at Beachview have demonstrated that there is much artistic learning that can come about through a balanced approach to teaching musicals. This balance between process and product has also addressed concerns by those such as Deihl (1964), whose studies have found that a focus on performance can often leave students with little, if any musical understanding (p. 61). The results of this study suggest that using an accessible, performance-based approach such as a musical to teach the arts can provide students with the tools they need to fully appreciate them.

As both case studies demonstrated, when students are part of the process of taking a musical from script to stage, they experience first-hand the many nuances along the way. Their participation has given them access to what MYP student Neelja called “behind the scenes stuff” - from the focus required at rehearsals to the excitement of opening night. This new perspective does not come from a book, or even from watching

others: it comes from participating, from experiencing first-hand what it means to be a true performing artist. Reimer recognized this in 1965 (p. 35) and Beachview students as young as grade four recognized this in 2008, with Murray explaining that participating in a show helps one to “learn more about the arts”. This, of course, fits with our definition of an *authentic arts experience* from the first chapter, where the important connection between active student involvement and artistic engagement was explained.

One of the most important new understandings that students now have is the effort that is required to put on a high-quality production. As I demonstrated, many participants in both productions noted the intensity of the rehearsals. Similarly, several students commented directly that they had learned about the commitment and focus required for the success of the show. For example, *Once Upon a Tale* participant Paul noted that he had learned that “...it is not easy to be in a play”, even though it is “super fun”, while *Fiddler on the Roof* participant Rory added that “...even a smaller role is a lot of work...”. Because several other students at all grade levels had comments such as these to share, it is reasonable to conclude that they are aware that being a successful performing artist does not come without work. It requires dedication, commitment, and attention to the smallest details. (Think back to Lily’s comment that “...the dancing has to be very perfect or else everything in the play gets messy”.) The students understand this because they have experienced it themselves – and this, ideally, makes them more aware artists and appreciative audience members.

To confirm these hypotheses, it is recommended that follow-up studies be conducted. One such study might examine if students who had participated in school musicals showed increased attention to detail in future artistic endeavours; those who did

might be said to have grown in their artistic awareness. Another such study might follow past school musical participants to see how they respond to viewing other artistic performances. Do their actions (e.g. respectful and engaged listening; applause) and comments show a heightened appreciation for the work of others? If so, it could be verified that participating in a musical can make one a more appreciative viewer of the performing arts.

The second of these proposed studies seems particularly important when one considers that large majorities of all surveyed students (36 of 43 grade fours; 21 of 29 grade sixes; and 28 of 37 grade sevens) expressed interest in watching future musicals. The reader will remember that Ross and Durgin (1983) suggested that participating in a school musical enables students to be more critical and aware audience members – and student comments such as Stage Manager Heather’s indicate that they also believe this to be the case. As we read in the previous chapter, she explained that it is “...easier to appreciate good musicals after being part of one”. Indeed, the fact that so many Beachview students now wish to watch other musical productions seems sufficient to confirm that a level of arts appreciation already exists. After all, it is highly doubtful that as many students would have responded positively to this same question before participating in the Beachview musicals. (As a side note, it would have been ideal if this question had been asked of students both before and after their musical experience; a comparative study that asks such questions of participants to clearly determine a change in attitude towards the arts would be helpful.)

Student comments in this area are plentiful and clear, both from participants in *Once Upon a Tale* and from those in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Many students, regardless of

how big or small their role was, want to watch future productions “...to learn from them”, as grade four student Ronny explained. This suggests an awareness of the valuable learning that can result from watching others. An even better example of this artistic appreciation comes from grade six students Bartholomew and Lucas. They recognized the different interpretations that are possible for stage shows such as musicals and expressed an interest in watching other productions to examine – and learn from – these interpretations. The reader is reminded that participants Tina and Betty noted that it is important that students pay careful attention to the quality of the production that they are watching, seeking out “good” musicals as learning opportunities. Student comments such as these show remarkable critical thinking for elementary school-aged students and lead me to conclude that aesthetic understanding has increased for at least some musical participants.

It is important to acknowledge that this was not the case for all participants. There were students in both grades four and seven who commented that they did not wish to watch future musicals. Some claimed that this was because they thought that watching a show could be “boring” (see, for example, the comments of Paul and Shawn), while others wanted to be the ones performing rather than watching (see the comments of grade four student Andrea or grade seven student Ian). In both cases, there are suggestions of ego-centrism, which seems to also indicate a lack of interest in appreciating the artistry of others. To encourage greater appreciation, and promote critical thinking skills which should lead to greater musical understanding, it is recommended that opportunities be given to view the work of others before, during, and after a school musical is staged. This might be footage of other school musicals found on *You Tube*, clips of movie

musicals, or even more ideally, live performances. Group discussions and written student reflections around such issues as artistic interpretation and performance quality would ensure that the students were truly thinking as artists, both on and off the stage. In this way, an artistic experience that is already meaningful for some students could become meaningful for more students, and more artistically complete for all participants.

In the preceding sections of this chapter, I examined the growth in artistic skills that students experienced as they worked on their musical. For many, this exposure to acting, dance, and music also contributed to new appreciation of these forms – both individually and as the complete artistic entity that is the musical. For example, the reader might recall how grade seven student David indicated that he was “...starting to like singing/acting/dancing more” as a result of his participation in this show. His comments were echoed by several of the grade four, six, and seven students surveyed, including grade four student Zach who found his experience with the musical to be both meaningful and enjoyable. When we are reminded that Zach missed the actual performances due to illness, we see even more indication of true arts appreciation. It wasn’t about being the centre of attention that was important to Zach (a fact that itself shows much personal growth when one knows this student’s history); rather, it was about the experience as a whole. The performance was secondary for him, perhaps because Zach knew that he had already contributed his part to *Once Upon a Tale* through his work on the posters and programs. This shows that some students grew in their understanding that a musical is not just about the acting, or the singing, or the dancing, but about all of these arts – as well as those arts behind the scenes that enhance what is seen on stage. If

this is the case, we can conclude that for some participants, a level of appreciation for the musical as a complete artistic entity now exists.

At the same time, it seems that not all students valued their experience working on the musical, nor felt that they had learned anything as a result of their participation. We think back specifically to the comments of grade four students Theo and Jimmy, the first of whom found the production to be too “kiddish” and the latter of whom couldn’t “...think of anything [he] learned”. Their comments remind us that while a musical is a wonderful way to facilitate arts appreciation, it does not necessarily reach all participants. For this reason, it is recommended that teachers offer a variety of arts experiences for their students throughout the year, with the understanding that different experiences will be meaningful for different individuals. When a musical is undertaken, it is also recommended that ongoing and open dialogue take place between the teacher-directors and student participants. This will ensure that students feel that their voices are being heard, and will also give teachers the opportunity to answer participant concerns (regarding such issues as musical choice in the case of Theo) and make connections that will clarify student learning. Ultimately, it is this dialogue that will contribute to greater artistic understanding and, hopefully, arts appreciation.

It can be concluded that being a part of a musical has positively impacted many of the Beachview students. Most have indicated their desire to be a part of future productions, including 39 of the 43 grade four students who completed the questionnaire, 31 of the 37 grade six students who completed the questionnaire, and 23 of the 29 grade seven students who completed the questionnaire. While I have shown that not all of these students have necessarily grown in their appreciation for each of the arts that make up the

musical, nor in their appreciation for watching others perform, it seems highly probably that most have grown at some level in their valuing of the performing arts more generally. Indeed, if they did not find value in these arts, why would so many be interested in participating in a musical again? The musical has made the performing arts accessible, and the more access and exposure that students have, the more likely it is that they will grow in their aesthetic understanding and artistic appreciation. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that schools look at including a musical as part of their balanced fine arts program.

The Issue of Personal Growth

While measuring student artistic appreciation was somewhat difficult, it was easy to see the students grow as individuals as they worked on the Beachview musical productions. With each rehearsal there was more certainty and more confidence, as we read in chapters three and four. The projecting voices and strong stances on stage clearly demonstrated that students knew that big or small, their role mattered; there were no understudies so they had to do their part. This was true of most of the student participants, but was particularly evident with students who had a reputation as being quite shy, such as grade four student Mandeep and grade seven student Manjeet. They knew, as special-needs student Betty did, that “...you need to be confident and outgoing to be in a play...” – and that the experience of working on the musical could contribute to this required confidence. Indeed, several students involved with both *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof* claimed that they had grown in confidence as a result of their participation in these musicals. This confirms what Leist (1958) found in his study of students who participated in school musicals.

While Leist was not clear as to why participating in a musical might increase self-confidence, the comments of some Beachview students allow us to make some conclusions. Douglas, a Forest Friend in *Once Upon a Tale*, explained that he “...enjoyed being on stage and feeling confident...” – a comment which explains that for students like Douglas, the act of performing itself increases confidence. As students have opportunities to perform for others and experience success, their confidence increases. This seems to be particularly true for young students, where any chance to perform that is recognized as being successful (through applause or positive feedback) appears to increase one’s belief that (s)he is capable. This is perhaps one of the most important reasons that opportunities for students to participate in musicals not be saved for high school, as has traditionally been the case, but be offered in elementary schools, too. It is therefore recommended that there be many opportunities for young students to perform, from formal productions such as musicals and concerts to casual, informal presentations for peers.

The comments of grade seven student Quinn remind us that another important contributor to confidence is feeling like one has made a difference. The large audiences, smooth-running shows, and accompanying praise were most likely all factors in leading her to conclude that “...I felt like I really contributed to it [the show]!” Other participants also noted that they believed they had played a part in contributing to successful performances. This included students in supporting roles, such as *Fiddler on the Roof* villager Manjeet, who understood that, regardless of the size of her part, she could “make a difference”. Comments such as Quinn's and Manjeet's suggest that self-concept can be connected to taking initiative, doing one's best, and seeing results. It is recommended

that students be given many opportunities to contribute to their schools and their communities, both through the performing arts and in other ways that are significant for them.

As the students realized what they had accomplished and saw how capable they were at their particular roles, they learned a lot about themselves – not only as performing artists, but also as people. Grade seven students Uttara and Neelja both commented on this in chapter four, as did Heather who began to recognize strengths in herself that she didn't even know she had. Heather saw her leadership qualities brought to the forefront, which was not surprising given her role as student Stage Manager. Other students also recognized their 'hidden talents' – and two of the participants in *Fiddler on the Roof* provide insights in their comments as to why these strengths may have become evident. Both Valarie and Lily, two very different students with very different parts in the show (Valarie being the quiet and persistent back stage helper and Lily the outgoing performer on stage), appreciated the leadership role that students were given in the musical. As we have read, they were not asked to simply follow direction, as might be the case with professional musical productions – but to share their suggestions for such important components as choreography and blocking. Both on and off the stage, these students felt that they were given a chance to truly “contribute ideas” that mattered (Valarie), which leads to another recommendation with regards to the promotion of individual growth through musicals: students should be encouraged to be thinking and collaborative performing artists throughout the learning process. As they do so, many will naturally step into leadership roles in those areas that they feel comfortable.

While the students who commented on their increased confidence did not specifically mention that it had moved beyond the stage into their daily lives, this was observed in many cases. Many of the students quoted in the preceding paragraphs were seen participating more regularly in class discussions, joking with friends, or, in the case of Mandeep, making eye contact and speaking with a louder, clearer voice than his usual whisper. Some students also took action which showed their growth as individuals. The reader might recall grade four students Pam and Steven, the first of whom decided to audition for an out-of-school children's theatre company and the latter of whom joined the school choir. In both cases, they did something on their own initiative connected to the positive experience that they had had with *Once Upon a Tale*. Indeed, both used the word "love" to describe how much they had enjoyed the experience of being in the school musical and Steven specifically commented that the experience had made him "feel good", thoughts echoed by grade seven student Manjeet. This shows what an impact participating in a musical can have on students, and leads to the conclusion that as students grow to become confident young performers, many will also become confident young people: individuals who don't need to conform because they feel comfortable being themselves.

Despite these positive accounts, I must conclude that the Beachview musicals did not contribute to increased self confidence for all participants. Specifically, a couple of the grade six and seven students wrote comments which suggest that they do not see themselves as capable performing artists. In particular, the comments of Tanya and Brandi come to mind, as both girls were critical of their acting and singing abilities respectively. As mentioned previously, it is highly probable that it was the auditions that

were the part of this musical experience that are to blame for this. Both students had positive things to say about the rehearsals and performances, with Tanya even noting that she felt that her ultimate role of working backstage was “very important to the play’s outcome...” This is hopeful, as it suggests that the negative impact of auditions on some students’ confidence might be remedied by allowing participants to have some choice with regards to how they are involved with the musical. I have demonstrated how this was successful with the production of *Once Upon a Tale*, as self-described “shy” Kristine was able to choose to work backstage rather than be in the spotlight. It is recommended that, in the promotion of student self-confidence, all possible efforts be made to find students roles (be they on-stage or off) which match their needs and interests. This, perhaps, might have made the musical experience a positive one for even those highly-critical students like Donny, whose needs were clearly not met by the current method of assigning parts. By respecting student input from the very beginning of the musical process, differences would be truly honoured and individualism promoted. Student self-confidence and individual growth might then increase, which, ironically, could also positively contribute to the strengthening of community. It is to this final area that I now turn my attention.

The Issue of Community Building

Student comments from both productions at Beachview School indicate that teamwork was an important part of the musical experience for many students. Participants such as Rochelle, Penny, Gloria, Ian, and Mandy all believe that they have learned teamwork because of their experience. Both grade four student Gregory and grade six student Uttara shared in the observation that something as “big” as a school

musical is only possible through teamwork. These student observations make it clear that the necessity of teamwork for each musical's success was such that it was evident to participants of various ages. This was enhanced for students like Aaron as they saw tangible positive results associated with their teamwork such as polished dance numbers and energetic group songs come together, all of which contributed to a shared sense of excellence (Greene, 2001, p. 145) and pride in the cast.

One might conclude that a school musical can be a prime mode for teaching students about the value of teamwork, particularly when teacher-directors help to create an environment that encourages support. With younger students in particular, it is important that students are taught "how to work with others" in a positive and constructive way, as Landon noted that he did (and was described in detail in chapter three). This might require the modelling of positive feedback, the practicing of patience and focus (as in the drama mirroring activity in which the grade four students took part), or the encouraging of students to watch each other perform – all of which were evident in the Beachview School rehearsals.

Ultimately, the hope is that the recognition of the value of teamwork from a purely practical point (in that everyone must do their part if the show is to come together by opening night) might move to a place of appreciation, for this is an important foundation for a caring community. This 'appreciation shift' seemed to happen for at least some participants in *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, as we read in chapter four. For example, grade four students Zach and Fontaine enjoyed watching their classmates rehearse, sentiments echoed by grade six student Tanya and grade seven student Aaron; this shows an appreciation for the talents of others. Students such as Asha

recognized that cast mates could learn from each other, which indicates an awareness of the different strengths and experiences that various students might contribute to the greater good. Asha's insights were confirmed by her classmate Uttara's comments, as well as researcher observations. Many participants were willing to be leaders when a rehearsal was focused on an area of expertise to them – but were also open to turning to their peers for support during rehearsals that focused on arts that were less familiar. This shows a level of respect that can only come from a true appreciation for the contributions of others – and it is this appreciation that is key as one works to build community. By trusting students with the significant task of staging a school musical and providing them with opportunities to work closely with one another, many have come to appreciate their peers. As such, it is recommended that teachers provide students with authentic arts experiences such as the musical that require a cooperation of talents for success. In this way, an appreciation for the strengths of others might be nurtured, as it was at Beachview Junior School.

One would be wise to remember that there were students in both of the preceding chapters who were not necessarily appreciative of their peers' contributions – or who, at minimum, did not show appreciation through their words. While opportunities were provided for watching and learning from each other, students such as Catherine (grade four) did not enjoy the redundancy of “listening to the others over and over again”. Similarly, supporting cast member Brenna (grade seven) did not feel that she learned very much from “standing around” and watching “...the people that are *known* as ‘the best singers’ or ‘the best actors’” (my emphasis). As I presented in chapter four, this was not because she didn't understand the importance of teamwork, but because, like her peer

Elyse who worked backstage, she felt less appreciated than other student participants. Whether or not this was actually the case is secondary to the girls' perceptions, for a truly caring community requires all members to feel fully valued. It is therefore recommended that steps be taken to ensure that all participants in a school musical feel appreciated for their contributions throughout the production process. This might involve observation and ongoing student reflection with this particular criterion in mind, or it might require more overt action on the part of the directing teachers, such as singling out contributions of various students on different days. Just as the students would sit and watch their peers run a particular song or scene, time could be set aside for a short cast 'tour' of the art room where the sets were being painted. While it is acknowledged that appreciation cannot – and should not – be forced, it can be encouraged by taking time to recognize particular students for their parts in making the musical a reality.

Though not all students felt as appreciated as hoped for, all Beachview musical participants appear to have felt safe and supported by their cast mates. For example, the reader might remember the comment of *Fiddler on the Roof* participant Tina who observed that while memorizing lyrics could be challenging, "...singing with everyone made it easier", suggesting a level of comfort with one's peers that does not exist without a catalyst. Other students such as Tindel and Ophelia recognized this, too, noting the "bonding" that developed as a result of the "intense experience" that is the musical (Ophelia). In this way, we can see how the teamwork and peer appreciation that were facilitated through the musical strengthened bonds between individual participants. This bonding led to new friendships for some students, including certain connections that participants such as Philip recognized would not have existed were it not for the musical.

These friendships, which were acknowledged by some students in their comments and observed by this author in many other instances, are tangible instances of caring. Students who might have had nothing to do with one another because of apparent differences were now closely connected because of a meaningful experience that united them. We can conclude that a “community of caring” such as that described by Noddings (1984, p. 199) exists amongst cast members – which also allows us to reasonably surmise that comparable community building is possible for casts involved with other elementary school musicals at similar schools in North America, particularly when attention is paid to the recommendations offered in this chapter.

In both case studies described in this dissertation, I have shown how the actions of this “community of caring” might also expand to include others. In particular, as grade four student Finn noted, the more people who see the student musical performances, the more people who have the opportunity to be impacted by the community – and potentially brought into it, as were the special senior citizen guests from Happyville Manor who were a part of the audience for each of the Beachview productions. They were made to feel welcome by the invitation to the shows, to be sure, but more than that, they were made to feel part of the community by the joy that permeated the performance venue. The students' energy brought both smiles and, in one case, tears of happiness to the seniors' faces. The reader might recall the happiness that grade four student Penny described as she looked out from the stage to see the smiling faces in the audience – and the pleasure that grade six student Edgar felt by “putting a smile on peoples [sic] faces”. These students felt cared for and enjoyed sharing this caring with others, just as Gloria (grade six) did when she performed for her parents and Evander (grade four) did when he

performed for his grandparents. An area for future study would be to examine how the students' family members and friends who were privy to the musical process, and knew how much the participating individuals and community had grown because of this experience, were affected by the show.

Based on the smiles seen both on the stage and in the audience at the Beachview productions, and the student comments about these smiles, it seems reasonable to conclude that something special can take place when students put on a musical. With both *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, the audience was entertained, to be sure – but more than that, they seemed genuinely happy. While this positive energy is not definable nor fully explainable, it was evident that it was a two-way street: the audience fed off the energy of the student performers, and the student performers reciprocated. To quote Maxine Greene (2001), it was as if the musical allowed those involved to “becom[e] a friend to someone else’s mind, with the wonderful power to return to that person a sense of wholeness” (p. 145). This is what makes the elementary school musical so much more than just a ‘public relations’ activity and necessitates the sharing of a finished production with others. It connects people in a way that is significant and changing, and this is what builds community. It is recommended that elementary schools undertaking musicals encourage school families, friends, and neighbours to see their productions – making a special effort to invite grandparents and senior citizens from local care facilities so that they, too, may be enveloped by this caring.

My Growth in Understanding Key Ideas

As many of the students involved in the case studies grew as individuals throughout the musical process, so too did I grow as an individual; particularly, in my

understanding of some key ideas throughout the research process. Specifically, my recognition of the complexity of such terms as 'authenticity' and 'aesthetics' has led me to expand my definition of each. Moreover, I have come to see that the dichotomies that are sometimes set up between education and fun, and between theory and practice, are often too simplistic. As a truly "reflective practitioner" (Taylor, 1996, p. 54), I would like to presently address each of these key ideas.

When I first began my research, I naively believed that for an experience to be authentic for students, it needed to emulate what goes on beyond the school walls in the 'real world'. I briefly discussed this when talking about the audition process in the second case study. I had indicated earlier in this chapter that indeed, just because an audition process might 'copy' professional auditions, this does not make it authentic. I hope that the definition that I ultimately used for an *authentic arts experience* as defined on page 7 ("an engaging, hands-on opportunity in the arts which requires both thinking and feeling, ultimately enabling the participant to grow both as an artist and as an individual as (s)he makes new discoveries") will answer those critics who might worry that I have not adequately considered the transformative nature of experiences that are truly authentic. By observing the students and reading their comments from the two case studies that we have determined are examples of authentic arts experiences, I now recognize that there is a direct connection between student engagement in activities and new understandings that impact their learning. It is these personal discoveries about art, life, and themselves that will often stay with the students for years to come and will help to shape them as artists and individuals. As is evident from the questionnaire responses (Appendices B, D, and E), each of the students involved with a Beachview School musical had his or her own

new learning, and the depth of many of these suggests that several students “expand[ed] [their] consciousness” and/or “shap[ed] [their] dispositions” (Eisner, 2002, p. 3). It is this personal recognition of something new or something more, precipitated by engagement of head and heart, that speaks to the authenticity of an experience for a student.

With regards to aesthetics, I have grown in my understanding of the complexity of the term 'aesthetic awareness', which I used overly generally at the start of my research by using it as a synonym for 'arts appreciation' or 'artistic understanding'. I thought that if students demonstrated an appreciation for the musical genre or the various arts that contribute to the musical, either through their actions or comments, they had demonstrated aesthetic awareness. This was, in fact, one of my main reasons for asking students to indicate in the questionnaire if they would like to participate in future musicals and/or watch other musical productions. I believed that if the answer to either of these questions was 'yes', it would be reasonable to surmise that the students could see some inherent value in the musical, and hence, had grown in their aesthetic awareness. I now acknowledge that it is not quite this simple.

As I indicated earlier in this chapter and the preceding two chapters, I do believe that it is significant that many students want to participate in future musicals, with several more being eager to watch other productions to learn from them. I am convinced that this strongly suggests an awareness of the value of this art form, as well as an appreciation on those students' parts for the entity that is the musical. This is significant; but, it is the students' comments that are of particular importance with regards to aesthetic awareness. Lyas (1997) argues that one of the most significant indicators of aesthetic development is a movement from the simple responses of children in their encounters with music or art

to "those responses with words and gestures that allow infinitely more complex and subtle ways of articulating ... aesthetic reactions" (p. 18). These reactions are connected to new understandings of significance that have come about through the authentic experiences described above. It is these new understandings and recognitions of beauty, delight, and goodness that I came to recognize as being of particular significance with regards to aesthetic awareness.

Barrows (1965) reminds us that it is "integrity in [arts] education" that was of particular importance here (p. 29, based on Hartshorn, 1959). As the students engaged in authentic experiences with drama, dance, and music, many grew in their recognition of this beauty. It was evident on their faces and in their actions, as well as in their comments. For example, several grade four children (including Catherine, Lindley, Liz, and Luke) described the "happy" nature of the final, integrated artistic product, suggesting an awareness of the delight of the musical. While few students were able to express their recognition of the aesthetic as directly as Brenna or Penelope (both of whom, the reader will remember, used the word "beautiful" in their questionnaire responses), many student comments had a "complex[ity]" (Lyas, 1997, p. 18). It was in reading these student reflections, many of which showed such maturity in their descriptions of the personal artistic engagement experienced by the students because of their involvement with a musical, that I came to understand the full significance of the term 'aesthetic awareness'. When elementary school-aged children can explain that they have "learned the atmosphere of the play", as Tessa claims to have done, they are showing true aesthetic awareness. This is something rare and something special, as I

learned, but it is something that can be promoted by involvement with a school musical; particularly, when students are given a voice.

The delight that can come with aesthetic awareness connects to the issue of enjoyment in education. While some have set up a dichotomy between that which is fun and that which is educational, it has become particularly clear to me as a result of my research that the two should not be separated. Indeed, I believe that this was one of the strengths of the arts education that I observed in both case studies at Beachview Junior School. As I witnessed students engaged in the learning process, smiles on their faces as they acted, danced, or sang, it became apparent that the fun they were having was not detracting from their education, but enhancing it.

The balance between process and product was of particular significance here. Because the teacher-directors at Beachview recognized that student learning was paramount, it wasn't only about producing high-quality shows, but about creating meaningful and engaging learning experiences *as* these high-quality shows came to fruition. It was these learning experiences that engaged many students, with several using the word "fun" to describe their participation in both musicals, as I discussed in both Chapters 3 and 4. I now recognize that despite what critics such as Mathis (1966) and Skaggs (1966) have suggested, this sense of fun does not detract from the educational value of an activity, nor make it any less "serious" (Skaggs, 1966, p. 149). To the contrary, the two case studies that I have undertaken for this dissertation have helped me to see that student enjoyment should be a goal for educators because of the role that it can play in engagement and valuing of experience on the part of participants. This seems to

be particularly true with regards to arts education, where delight in the experience can arguably make the aesthetic particularly apparent to young people.

Another dichotomy that is of issue in education, and of relevance to this thesis, is that of theory and practice. I spoke of this in the first chapter when I noted that it is teachers who are "perhaps best able to connect... theory to practice" (p. 15). Like many, I was guilty of separating the two rather simplistically, believing that theory was tied to the university - and practice - to the classroom. As a result of undertaking my research, however, I now acknowledge how closely connected theory and practice are. This growth in my understanding might be expected based on my methodology because "...qualitative case studies build theory" (Merriam, 1988, p. 53).

By observing the student participants of *Once Upon a Tale* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, and analyzing their questionnaire responses in relation to the literature, I have constructed my own theory about elementary school musicals. In doing so, I have come to see that Glaser and Strauss (1967) are correct in their assertion that "Theory building comes from the insights of a sensitive observer" (as quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 60). By carefully watching the students as they undertook the musical process and listening to their voices in their follow-up questionnaire reflections, I now understand how an elementary school musical can serve as an authentic, integrated performing arts experience. My theory has been presented throughout the course of this dissertation and has been interconnected with suggestions for practice, particularly in this chapter. I have grown as a "reflective practitioner" (Taylor, 1996, p. 54) in my concomitant understanding of the interactive relationship between the two. I hasten to add that theory can influence practice, to be sure, but practice can also influence theory. In this regard, I

ask the reader to join me as I present my final thoughts and summary of recommendations for those undertaking elementary school musical productions with their students.

Final Thoughts and Summary of Recommendations

This dissertation began with the following question: “Can an elementary school musical serve as an authentic, integrated performing arts experience with benefits for both the student as individual and the independent school community?” After studying the literature review, examining the two Beachview School case studies, and analyzing the students' questionnaire responses to reach my conclusions, I feel confident in saying that the answer to my question is a positive one – particularly – when the following recommendations, summarized from this chapter, are considered:

- Elementary schools should include a musical as part of their balanced fine arts program, but must also offer a variety of other arts experiences for their students throughout the year, with the understanding that different experiences will be meaningful for different individuals.
- Great care must be given to choosing a musical that will not only be enjoyable, but even more importantly, educationally sound.
- An audition-less ‘audition’ process should be undertaken so that all students are artistically-engaged from the onset of the musical and no students are made to feel excluded.
- Rehearsals should be carefully planned and executed in such a way that they are as meaningful as possible for all participants.

- Teachers must always put student learning first by creating experiences that are both educational and enjoyable for their students.
- Over the course of a school year, integrated arts experiences such as musicals should be balanced with other performing arts experiences that highlight the various arts independently.
- Direct instruction in acting, dancing, and music be given so that each of the performing arts is given the time and attention it deserves.
- When financially possible, workshops led by professional actors, dancers, and musicians should be offered to fully authenticate the students' experience.
- Stage configuration should be carefully considered to ensure that full movement is possible in student dances.
- All musical participants, regardless of role, should be provided with a melodic vocal score for those songs that they are singing.
- All students should be required to try the various performing arts that contribute to the musical and all possible efforts should then be made to find students roles (be they on-stage or off) which match their needs and interests.
- Many opportunities should be provided for students to perform in elementary schools, from formal productions such as musicals and concerts to casual, informal presentations for peers.
- To encourage arts appreciation, and promote critical thinking skills which should lead to greater musical understanding, opportunities should be given for students to view the work of others before, during, and after a school musical is staged.

- Ongoing and open dialogue must take place between teacher-directors and student participants so that students feel that their voices are being heard and teachers can answer participant concerns.
- Students should be encouraged to be thinking and collaborative performing artists throughout the learning process.
- Students should be provided with authentic arts experiences that require a cooperation of talents, but teacher support must be given to ensure that all participants feel appreciated for their contributions throughout the process.
- Schools undertaking musicals should encourage school families, friends, and neighbours to see their productions – making a special effort to invite grandparents and senior citizens from local care facilities.
- Students should have many opportunities to contribute to their schools and their communities, both through the performing arts and in other ways that are significant for them.

While not perfect, the musical productions undertaken at Beachview School were significant integrated performing arts experiences that were meaningful for many students, resulting in impressive and entertaining shows, but much more importantly, facilitating an “expanding [of] consciousness, shaping [of] dispositions, satisfying [of] quest for meaning, establishing [of] contact with others, and sharing [of] culture” for those involved with the learning process (Eisner, 2002, p. 3). Students such as Manjeet will “always remember” their experience – not because of the final product on the stage, but because of how they have been enhanced as artists, individuals, and caring

community members as they have participated in a truly authentic performing arts experience. If the recommendations above are followed, it is hoped that many more students will have similar, or even more positive, experiences. As Greene (2001) reminds us: "... it is indeed art that brings the parts of us, perhaps even the parts of our community, together" (p. 120). The elementary school musical can do this. As educators and as human beings, can we ask for more?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire distributed to students involved in both case studies

The School Musical Student Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. It has twelve questions. Please answer each question as honestly as possible.

(1) Name: _____

(2) Class: _____

(3) What musical were you in? _____

(4) What was your role in the musical? _____

(5) Which of the following did you have a chance to participate in as a result of this musical? Please check all that apply.

- a. Acting
- b. Singing
- c. Dancing
- d. Poster and program creation
- e. Sets
- f. Props
- g. Other (What? _____)

(6) What did you **learn** by being a part of this musical?

(7) What did you **most** enjoy about being a part of this musical? Please be as specific as possible.

(8) What did you **least** enjoy about being a part of this musical? Please be as specific as possible.

(9) What words would you use to describe the musical **rehearsals**? List any that come to mind.

(10) What words would you use to describe the musical **performances**? List any that come to mind.

(11) a. Would you like to participate in future school musicals?

Yes or No

b. Why or why not?

(12) a. Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?

Yes or No

b. Why or why not?

Appendix B: Summary of questionnaire responses from grade four students

43 out of 43 grade students (100%) responded.

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Andrea	"Forest Friend"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I learned that everybody has a really [sic] great talent"	"I loved going to practice and trying on costumes [and] learning dances"	"Putting face paint because you can't scratch your nose"	"fun, exciting [sic], feeling important"	"awesome [sic: awesome], fun, cool, exciting [sic]"	Yes "because I love to act"	No "because I want to be in the musical"
Bob	"Papa Bear"	Acting	"I learned that it is a lot of work to put every thing together and to get every one to memorise there [sic] lines"	"I really enjoy being center of attention. Lots of people will get frightened when there on stage but that's the complete opposite [sic] for me"	"I have to say the worst part of the play was staying inside"	"do I sense [sic] over and over until lunch is over"	"We do not get any fresh air"	No "because we do not get any fresh air"	Yes "because I like being apart of something and being an audience is"
Catherine	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned that you have to cooperate [sic] well and use my time wisely"	"I enjoyed performing"	"Listening to the others over and over again"	"fun sometimes boring"	"Exciting, nervous, happy"	Yes "I would because it is fun being onstage"	Yes "I would like to see how they act"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Cindy	"Goldilocks"	Acting, Singing	"To project [sic] my voice to express my face more"	"I most enjoyed performing in front of the grandparents and parents"	"Nothing. I loved it all!"	"fun, memorize lines, actions, face expressions, project [sic] more, wonderful, no going outside, work on your lines, great"	"Fun, scary, wonderful, great"	Yes "because I love acting and performing and as the year[s] go on my performing skills can get better and better"	Yes "because I love waking [sic] people perform and they can give me more ideas on how to do [sic: be] a better performer"
Douglas	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned that we can help each other out when were [sic] either on stage or off stage"	"I most enjoyed being on stage and feeling confident what I have to when I perform [sic]"	"I least liked going over the lots of times but it is for practice"	"fun, ideas, good"	"best, confident, proud"	Yes "I am not sure. I would like a bigger role next time"	Yes "I would like to watch because I could get ideas from there [sic] actions"
Evander	"Student 8 pig"	Acting, singing, other ("speaking")	"That you have to cooperate [sic] with others. And that you have to practice and keep up"	"I enjoyed my granparents [sic] coming and watching me as a pig and performing [sic] as a group"	"How we had to miss lunch and fresh air. Also how some people could change parts"	"do one scene over and over till lunch is over"	"Fun when it was your turn to speak and went well"	No "because we could get no fresh air in school"	Yes "because I am not in it"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Finn	"Posters and programs/ Singing"	Singing, poster and program creation	"I learnd [sic] that if you perform in front of a bigger audience, you'll build a bigger community of arts appreciation"	"I enjoyed that I built a community of arts appreciation"	"I least enjoyed missing lunches"	"run throws [sic]"	"plays"	Yes "because I really enjoyed it"	Yes "because I think it is interesting watching plays"
Fontaine	"Forest Friend"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Sets	"I learned the fact one can help another in many different ways"	"I most enjoyed listening to Detective Wiselock and Bob do their duo (backstage)"	"I least enjoyed missing lunch for rehearsal"	"Boring, annoying"	"fun, silly"	Yes "because it is fun and exciting to be in one"	Yes "because I want to see what others are doing, an insight to their personality"
Gregory	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned that to make this big thing you need teamwork and practice"	"I liked the feeling of being on stage and knowing that people are watching you"	"How we had to miss our lunch time"	"repetive [sic]"	"Tense"	Yes "because I like the feeling of being onstage"	Yes "so we can learn new things and watch plays"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Gretchen	"Posters and Programs"	Singing, Poster and program creation, Sets, Other ("runner")	"I learned how to make programs"	"I liked to run to get the classes and get snippets of the musical"	"When ever it was rainy we went [sic] outside and when it was sunny we stayed inside"	"boring, work, computer lab"	"fun, scary [sic], freacky [sic] excited"	Yes "because it was exciting"	Yes "because it must [be] fun for the performers"
Gwen	"Mama Bear"	Acting, Singing	"I really learned much about acting. I also learned how to express myself on stage. It was a great experenece" [sic]	"I really enjoyed having a good role in the play"	"I least enjoyed having to miss my lunch time to practice. I wish we had used some other time to practice"	"Fun, amusing, sometimes hard"	"Funny"	Yes "I would like to be in more musicals because I really enjoy singing and acting"	Yes "I really like watching plays, musicals and skits"
Hamish	"Mr. Wolf"	Acting, Singing	"I learned how to be a [sic] actor"	"I enjoyed doing my wolf scene with Hunter"	"I leased [sic] enjoyed coming in at lunch to practise"	"Fun, sometimes boring"	"Great, asome [sic], vantastic [sic]"	Yes "I would but I would like to have a smaller part or be a posters person"	Yes "I would because you never know what is going to happen next"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Henrick	"Councillor Tortoise"	Acting, Singing, Sets	"I learned how to make my voice loud and clear. I also learned not to speak so fast"	"I enjoyed doing the sets with the art club"	"I didn't enjoy spending my extended lunch inside practicing for the play"	"quit [sic] useful, fun to speak loud"	"fun"	Yes "I have a lot of fun"	Yes "I get to find ways to improve my speaking"
Jane	"Pig #5"	Acting, Singing	"I learn how to act and improve my lines and preject [sic]"	"I most enjoyed all the costumes"	"so [sic: some] of the improv [sic] I worked with"	"energetic, comments, exiting [sic]"	"energetic, aplase, exiting, nervaecing" [sic]	Yes "I love acting"	Yes "I like watching plays"
Jimmy	"Forest Friend"	Singing	"I can't think of anything I learned"	"What I most enjoyed about the play was dancing"	"What I least enjoyed about the play was missing my lunch"	"long"	"Fun, exiting" [sic]	Yes "I like performing"	Yes "I would like to see other performers"
Jiel	"Posters and Programs"	Sets	"You have to participate in the play"	"Making the posters for the play"	"Not having time to go outside when we were practicing"	"fun, lots of work, sometimes boring"	"scary, loud noises, more people"	Yes "I would because it is kind of fun to sing and act"	Yes "I would because I like to be entertained"
Jon	"Props and Singing"	Props	"I learned that you have to be ready and prepared"	"I loved trying not to bee [sic] seen to [sic] much"	"Nothing"	"orginaized and suceful" [sic]	"exciting, simeple [sic]"	Yes "because I loved doing it"	Yes "because I want to inprove [sic]"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Kassidy	"Forest Friend"	Dancing	"That we have to work really hard to put on a great show"	"I most enjoyed dancing and being on stage and practicing [sic]"	"I didn't like the fact that we had to miss our outside time"	"fun, asome [sic], enjoyable"	"fun, being up on stage"	Yes "I would because you get to act, sing, dance"	Yes "I would because I could see others acting as well"
Kim	"Forest Friend"	Acting, singing, dancing	"When doing this part of the musical, I learned new dance moves, to speak slower, and to project my voice"	"I most enjoyed people watching us do the dance"	"I least enjoyed when someone made any type of mistake"	"exciting, fun, funny, practicing, mistaking [sic]"	"exciting, funny, practical"	Yes "because they are fun"	Yes "because it's amusing"
Kristine	"Props"	Singing, Props	"I learned you have to be prepared"	"I enjoyed taking the props on and of [sic] and I sort of liked singing, not that much though"	"Basically singing in front of the crowd because I'm a little shy"	"entertaining, enjoyable"	"well done"	Yes "I would if I don't really have to act"	Yes "because I find them easy to learn from so that I feel more confident"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Kyle	"Pig #2"	Acting, Singing	"I have learned that you have to say my [sic] line loudly"	"Singing"	"Nothing"	"boring, fun, enjoyable"	"great, awesome"	Yes "because I like to act"	Yes "because I want to see other plays"
Landon	"Troll"	Acting	"how to work with others"	"jumping on to the stage"	"I really wold [sic] want more lines"	"practising"	"playing in front of people"	Yes "because I like acting"	No "because I would rather be doing it"
Lasha	"Pig #6"	Acting	"it takes a lot of preparation and copreation [sic]"	"singing sunshine vitamin"	"I wanted a bigger part"	"OK"	"exciting"	Yes "because I like to sing and act"	Yes "because it is interesting to wacht [sic] them"
Lindley	"Pig #4"	Acting, Singing, Sets ("Art Club")	"I learned that if we try really hard that we can all work toghether [sic] (all grade fours). We can also help each other with lines and practising"	"I enjoyed getting to learn the Sunshine Vitamin and watching other peoples [sic] scenes"	"Having to miss a lot of break and ocasionally [sic] P.E."	"fun, listening, boring, practice, more practice"	"Good, happy, quiet, fun, excitement, people, happy, proud"	Yes "I would because even though we had a lot of practices it turned out great"	Yes "I really like to watch people preform [sic] and I enjoy listening to songs"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Luke	"Poster guy"	Singing, Poster and program creation	"I learnnd [sic] that it is not easy to go in front of a stage in front of millions of people"	"I liked the two songs caring sharing and sunshine vitamin because I was on stage those times"	"I didn't [missing word] to miss any of lunch or recess because those are our only time[s] in the day to go outside"	"fun, hard"	"fun, funny, comedy, happy and cheerful"	Yes "because it is fun"	Yes "because it is funny"
Mandeep	"Junior Bear"	Acting, Singing	"I learnt that it takes a long time to put a play together and it takes a lot of courage to stand up and perform at [for] a lot of people"	"I most enjoyed being a humorous actor"	"I least enjoyed as being a singer"	"Musical run through, musical practice, musical practice play performance"	"acting in front of people for real, scary practice"	Yes "I want to be part of other musical because I want to become a really powerful actor"	Yes "I would like to because then I could learn and improve on my acting"
Michelle	"Amow (Narrator)"	Acting, Singing	"I learned to talk louder and slower and how to act and sing with expression"	"I enjoyed working with everybody and how I got to act in the play"	"I didn't like missing lunch that much"	"We did it at lunch and we worked on certain scenes each day 2, 4, sometimes 6"	"I felt nervous and excited cause I could make a mistake but I practiced hard"	Yes "cause know [sic] I know what to do in a play"	Yes "cause I could use other peoples [sic] ideas"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Mitch	"Pig"	Acting	"How to be a better actor"	"Saying my lines"	"Missing our lunch recess"	"I don't really like them because I would rather be playing"	"We did really well"	No "because I don't like all the preparation"	Yes "because I like watching but not acting"
Murray	"Narrator"	Acting	"really tough memorizing [sic] your lines" "It takes a lot of time to make a play"	"being the main character" "Having a lot of lines"	"missing my lunch time"	"fun, musical, funny, fairytale"	"fun, musical, funny, fairytale"	Yes "Because it is fun and because it can help me learn more about the arts"	Yes "Because it can give me an idea what I should do better on"
Nadeen	"Forest Friend"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I really like being in plays"	"I liked dancing, acting, and singing"	"Waiting to go on stage during the performance" [sic]	"fun, acting, grade 4, musical"	"exciting [sic], fun, nervous"	Yes "because I really like acting and all that stuff"	Yes "because I like to watch them but most of all I like being in them"
Nadia	"Detective Wiselock"	Acting, Singing	"I learned that it is hard to be a talking part and hard to sing with another person"	"I enjoyed the costumes and I liked to talk while I use expression"	"I didn't like nothing!" [ie, there wasn't anything that she didn't enjoy]	"I think that it was really fun"	"I think there were really good!!!"	Yes "Because it was a good experience"	Yes "Because it is really interesting"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Olivia	“Little Red Riding Hood”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned that if you contribute a ton to the musical, it can be very fun”	“I most enjoyed having a solo and having a main part”	“I least enjoyed having to miss PE and never missing French”	“Fun, boring, too much listening, exciting”	“Scary (at the first part), exciting, fun”	Yes “because it was fun and it was a great experience”	Yes or No “It depends. I would like to watch other groups because it is fun, but I wouldn’t like to because I would more like to take action in what the performers are doing”
Pam	“Ms. Higgle Piggley”	Acting	“I learned that things can’t make you happy, you need people”	“I enjoyed being one of the main characters. I also have never been in a musical so it was exciting”	“I was sad because I was a pig and the noses were hard to breathe [sic] in”	“Good because it was good practice. I also didn’t like using lunch times”	“Great. No one forgot the lines. It was very exciting”	Yes “because I really enjoy being in a musical. I love being in musicals”	Yes “I have been to a lot of musicals and really enjoyed them. I am going to another musical soon”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Paul	"A classroom pig"	Acting, Singing	"I learned that it is not easy to be in a play and I also learned that it was super fun"	"I enjoyed performing it most because of are [sic] work payed off [sic] and it was fun and everyone liked it"	"I didn't like missing recess"	"fun sometimes, boring sometimes"	"Excellent [sic], fun"	Yes "because I liked performing it"	No "because sometimes it gets boring"
Penny	"Props"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Poster and program creation, Props	"I learned that teamwork can let you go a long way. I also learned that co-operating with others make [sic] things a lot better"	"I enjoyed 'Caring, Sharing' because it was nice to see everybody singing and parents smiling"	"There really isn't something I least enjoyed but I sort of didn't like missing my lunch and other of my favourite periods"	"Fun, tiring, to [sic] much listening"	"Good, exciting, tiring, fun"	Yes "I would like to participate in future shool [sic] [musicals] because I like to act A LOT"	Yes "because then I could see what I could do to make our play better than before"
Rochelle	"Mare [sic] Hare"	Acting	"that you have to cooperate"	"I enjoyed acting"	"Have to be quiet in the music room"	"Fun, interesting and boring"	"Fun, interesting, boring, scary"	Yes "I would cause [sic] it is fun"	Yes "cause [sic] it looks fun"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Ronny	"Detective Bob"	Acting, singing	"How to act and sing better"	"Acting because I like working with other people"	"I did not like staying in at recess because I never got that much play time"	"fun"	"fun, scary, exiting [sic]"	Yes "because I really liked it"	Yes "I want to learn from them"
Shawn	"Grey Wolf"	Acting	"I learned to project my voice very loud and slow"	"I liked saying my lines in front of everyone"	"I did not like coming in at lunch and skipping our time"	"Very long, very strict"	"flowing, good, loud, very consistent"	Yes "I really liked it"	No "I think it is boring"
Shayleen	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned new dance moves and a song called Sunshine Vitimin [sic]. We also got to were [sic] a costume and I was a deer"	"I liked at the end singing Caring Sharing because we should all be caring, shareing [sic] and it goes with are [sic] community"	"That we had to wait in the room and talk quietly [sic] or read or sketch"	"We got to get are [sic] rolls [sic] and ya [sic]"	"We all had a lot of fun"	Yes "because I love to act and sing"	Yes "It will be fun!! And you get to watch"
Steven	"A pig"	Acting	"To work as a group"	"I liked it because I fell [sic] good up there and it makes me feel good"	"I didn't like coming in at lunch"	"I think she got a little strick [sic]"	"Good! Very good"	Yes "because I thought I did really good and I love being up there"	Yes or no "Kind of because it gets a littel [sic] boring"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Theo	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"That every musical Southridge has had is really boring"	"I did not really enjoy being in the play cause [sic] it is really boring and a waste of time and its to [sic] little kidish [sic]. But if I had to answer acting was my favourite part"	"It was boring, a waste of time, and super kidish [sic]"	"boring, inconsideret [sic] waste"	"good but still a bit kidish [sic]"	Yes or no "No if it's a waste. But Yes if its [sic] not kidish"	Yes or no "No if its[sic] kidish [sic] But yes if its [sic] a good play"
Veronica	"Forest Friend"	Singing, Dancing	"I leard [sic] to work together"	"I liked to go behind the sets and being on stage"	"I did not like to stay in at lunch"	"I think it was good and there was no time wasted"	"It was great. I think everybody enjoyed it!"	Yes "because we have great teachers and because we did so well on this one!"	Yes "because I can see other people do there [sic] presentations"
Zach	"Making posters"	Singing, Poster and program creation	"I learnt that being a part of the play is actioully [sic] really fun"	"getting to watch my friends do there [sic] parts and act"	"I didn't enjoy when I had to sit and not get to do anything"	"exited [sic], fun, wondering, colouring, drawing, ideas"	"not here"	Yes "I would like to because it is fun and nice"	Yes "because I feel realaxed [sic] and enjoy it"

Appendix C: “Express Yourself!” sheet for students to indicate role preferences

Express Yourself!

Next term, we will be doing a PYP Inquiry unit called “Express Yourself!” As part of this unit, we will have the chance to be the leaders in the PYP musical.

Today, we are going to watch another school’s musical performance. As you watch, think about the connections to our own upcoming production. What roles do you see today that are meaningful to **you**? What roles might you be interested in for our PYP musical?

Please number the following choices from 1 (your top choice) to 10 (your bottom choice):

- _____ Speaking several lines
- _____ Speaking 1 or 2 lines
- _____ Singing in a larger group number
- _____ Singing solo or with a smaller group
- _____ Speaking lines and singing with a larger group
- _____ Speaking lines and singing solo or with a smaller group
- _____ Dancing
- _____ Sets and props (off-stage work)
- _____ Prompting (off-stage work)
- _____ Working on posters and programs (off-stage work)

For your **top choice**, explain why you would like to do it.

What experience do you have that would make this a great role for you?

Appendix D: Summary of questionnaire responses from grade six students

37 students out of 44 students (84.1%) responded. In total, 66 grade six and seven students out of a total of 88 (75%) responded.

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Andy	"Grade 6 Boys singing"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned new songs. I learned that I'm not good at singing."	"I enjoyed singing, and skipping school."	"To [sic] big of an audience."	"Fun. Enjoyable yet somewhat boring at times."	"Nerve-racking."	No "I don't like singing in public."	Yes or no "Depends on what musical."
Bartholomew	"Rebo Dubrovsky, Fiddler"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Other ("I was a fiddler who played before the show started.")	"How to act and participate in a theatrical production."	"Missing class time, learning how to act. It's a very group-oriented experience."	"I sometimes would get behind on school work."	"Hectic, but very fun."	"Scary at first, but once we got acting there was no problem."	Yes "A very original, satisfying experience from start to finish."	Yes "It is fun to watch how others interpret and re-enact these stories."
Betty	"Back-ground dancer/ singer/ actor (minor villager) and poster maker & set painter"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Poster and program creation, Sets	"I learned that you need to be confident and outgoing to be in a play. I also learned that there is a lot	"What I enjoyed most about being a part of this musical was all the fun dances and song that we had to learn. I also enjoyed	"What I least enjoyed was all the repetitiveness of learning the dances and songs."	"repetitive, interesting, fun"	"wonderful, fun, well done"	Yes "because they let me explore my fun and creative side, help me meet my fun need, and are a	Yes "because a good musical is very interesting and you can learn from them."

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Betty: continued			of work involved in being a part of the play but it has many fun aspects within all the work.”	working on the sets.”				great way to learn new things and do new things.”	
Braden	“Sang in Tradition, singing To Life and Rich Man”	Singing	“New songs and dance moves; learned the Fiddler on the Roof story”	“Fun teachers, skipping class for rehearsals, fun to act with my friends”	“Having extra homework from missing class; everything else was great.”	“Fun, exciting, non-boring”	“Fun, exciting”	Yes “It was really fun.”	Yes “Fun to watch.”
Chad	“I was a class singer/ dancer in ‘To Life’ and ‘Rich Man’”	Singing, Dancing	“I learned a lot of dancing and singing. I learned a story.”	“I loved the ‘To Life’ song! And I liked watching the end result.”	“Practising at home! Because I didn’t have time and it usually happened late at night.”	“Very organized, fun, repetitive [sic]”	“Wonderful, greatly organized, fun to watch”	No “Because I do a lot of things outside [of school] and it was hard to do it and memorize the song”	Yes “Because I like to think about how they practiced”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Charlie	"Grade 6 boys"	Singing, Dancing	"I didn't really learn anything."	"I enjoyed the musical because I had a lot of fun."	"I didn't enjoy singing and dancing in front of others."	"Boring, singing, acting, sometimes fun"	"Boring, singing, acting, sometimes fun"	No "I don't like musicals."	No "I don't like musicals."
David	"Motel, the tailor"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"It was my first musical and I learned a lot. I learned how it felt to sing and act in front of a crowd, especially how it feels when you sing a solo. I also learned that in a musical, you must all work together, as a whole."	"I really enjoyed skipping class. Also, I liked singing the solo."	"Holding my partner's hand"	"Lots of fun, repetitative [sic], exciting, at times boring, embarrassing"	"Exciting, thrilling, worth all the practice, gave me self pride"	Yes "Yes, for I enjoyed it and I am starting to like singing/ acting/ dancing more."	Yes "It is fun and moving for I know what it feels like. Good way to spend time."
Edgar	"The sons"	Acting, Dancing	"Acting is a lot of fun and playing and rehearsing is	"I loved dancing and singing. I found it a lot of fun. I	"I found that the enduring rehearsals was [sic] very boring,	"Fun, exciting, practice"	"Great, super fun, awesome"	Yes "I hope to be involved in future school	No "If you're not acting, I wouldn't prefer

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Edgar: continued			a great experience. I believe that acting takes a lot of work, but most of it comes from your own character.”	especially liked acting and putting a smile on peoples [sic] faces.”	especially being a minor character. I also found the try-outs very suspenseful.”			musicals. I find it a great way to let your character shine.”	watching groups performing musicals.”
Elyse	“Backstage”	Sets, Others (Technical/Slideshow)	“I learned how visual parts of a play can improve the overall appearance of things so well. I loved making the slideshow and painting the sets.”	“I liked being behind the scenes and helping improve the show, it was also a good experience to sing in groups. Also I enjoy working groups and teams so I loved to [? – should be “the”] interactive side.”	“I didn’t like that us backstage people weren’t recognized [sic] very much. The people behind the scenes seemed quite well known to the audience but since my backstage part wasn’t as big, we were barely recognized.	“Calm, non stressful”	“Energetic, lively, colourful”	Yes “I would like to join a play were [sic] there is more larger parts with no singing so the actors in the school who don’t enjoy singing will want to try out”	Yes “It if was a comedy and funny”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Elyse: continued					Also I think there should be less singing parts for those who love to act, but not to sing."				
Gloria	"Match-maker and L'hiam"	Singing, Dancing	"Teamwork"	"Performing in front of my parents"	"When I was sick and I missed learning the choreography ; the teacher hadn't told me what to do. I didn't like not wearing shoes for 'Matchmaker'."	"Really long"	"Good; well done"	No "because I'm not a risk-taker type of person"	Yes "I like to watch others; I find them interesting"
Gurgot	"Back-ground singer"	Singing	"I didn't learn anything."	"I most enjoyed singing in front of an audience because it made me feel good."	"I didn't enjoy taking time off my classes."	"Fun but some people fooled around"	"I don't know"	No "because I have stage fright"	Yes "because it's nice to see how hard they worked on it"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Hilary	"Chava (a sister)"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Sets Other (painting sets)	"I learned a lot of acting skills and as well I added to my singing vocab."	I really like performing... I also like it when you get on stage and get your part perfect, then behind stage your [sic] like... yes!"	"All the times when your [sic] practicing and you have to do a certain scene over and over again especially when you don't have a big role in that particular scene."	"You need patience, repetative [sic], fun"	"Stressful, exciting, anxiety, hopeful"	No "We spent a lot of time missing whole classes and there was a lot of catch-up work I had to do."	[Not answered]
Jill	"Dancer and singer in my grade"	Singing, Dancing	"I learned that it takes time and effort to make a musical work."	"I enjoyed being up on stage and I like to perform. I also enjoyed being up on stage with my class."	"I wish I auditioned for the musical so I wish I could have gotten a bigger part."	"Fun, amusing, exciting, enjoying."	"Fun, exciting, amazing"	Yes "Because I like acting and I love talking and its [sic] fun"	Yes "Yes because I Like seeing others and watching musicals."
Kayla	"Match Maker scene (singer); Bar scene (singer)"	Singing, Dancing	"I learnt more about the play."	"Learning and acting the play."	"Nothing."	"Fun, exciting"	"Exciting"	Yes "because I enjoy being in plays"	Yes "because it's fun to watch, and u [sic] learn about the play."

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Kimmy	“Back-ground dancer/singer”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned a lot, [such as how to] act, sing, dance.”	“Practicing and watching others and missing school.”	“Rehersals [sic] during lunch/after school.”	“Working, hard, good, trieing [sic], boring, long, busy, serious”	“Energetic, fun”	Yes “because I think it’s a great opper-tunity [sic] for people.”	Yes “because I like musicals.”
Liz	“Zelta – a villager”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learnt about the Jewish traditions, celebrations, etc. I learned some new songs and dance moves.”	“I enjoyed the opportunity to have a speaking role, skipping class, getting to know the characters we all were chosen to play.”	“I didn’t really like how for audition we had a choosen [sic] song to say. I think it would be more effective if we had a choice of song.”	“Busy, serious but fun, active”	“Fun, interesting, active, happy, cheerful, amazing”	Yes “I had a lot of fun, and I love acting and talking in front of an audience.”	Yes “I find it entertaining. Its [sic] like watching a movie right in front of you.”
Lucas	“Generic gr. 6 male”	Acting, Other (“usher”)	“Some songs; the story of Fiddler on the Roof; how much time preparing and organising takes”	“1) missing some classes; 2) singing, & learning new songs”	“Having to go at night, I usually eat, read and sleep during that time.”	“constantly re-starting a scene; reppetitive [sic]”	“quite good, a bit of singing and backstage work, very smooth otherwise”	Yes “it was fun, if time consuming”	Yes “I want to see how they see the play, and how they put it together”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Mandy	"Mrs. Dubinsky (minor part)"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"When doing this musical I learned how to act better and how to work with others (teamwork). I also learned commitment and persistence [sic]"	"I really enjoyed getting to play a role in the play. I really like public speaking and acting so that was a lot of fun for me."	"I'm not really a singer so I didn't enjoy that part so much."	"fun and yet organized. Everyone really tried and it was a lot of fun getting to practice and watching the group get better."	"Great. They really came together well. The only problem was that the backstage talking was a little loud."	Yes "I love acting and talking in front of people"	Yes "because I think that they are really fun and exciting to walk [sic: should be "watch"]"
Patricia	"Mordca's daughter"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"That I loved performing publically [sic]"	"Having all eyes on you when performing; getting ready (costumes/ma keup)"	"How you had to repeat some parts over and over to get them right (tiring and boring)"	"Repetative [sic], tiring, boring, fun"	"Exciting, nervous, fun"	Yes "It was a fun experience overall"	Yes "I love watching a story being acted out in front of me"
Rose	"Usher"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Other (ushering and getting classes)	"I learnt a-bout cultures in the older days. I learnt different skills for ushering."	"I liked the music and how we learnt it."	"Waiting to see it."	"Hard-working, concentrated, determined"	"Not sure"	Yes "I want more oppurtunities. [sic]"	Yes "because I liked watching how other people do stuff."

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Shannon	"I was in 'Match-maker' and 'To Life'"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Sets, Other ("Painting of sets")	"I learned about how to be a part of a musical. I learned new songs and dances."	"I enjoyed singing and dancing; learning new songs and choreography [sic]; I also enjoyed just being on stage."	"I enjoyed EVERY-THING!!"	"Welcoming /good atmosphere; fun"	"Fun, enthusiastic"	Yes "It was a great experience. I had fun."	Yes "It is inspiration [sic]. It allways [sic] helps to see others (because you learn and can apply that to your own performance."
Tanya	"Backstage (props) and some singing and dancing"	Singing, Dancing, Sets, Props	"I learned that even though backstage doesn't seem like a very important role, it actually is. We not only have to make sure all the sets and props are on the stage at the right time,	"I enjoyed working with Valarie and feeling that our part was very important to the play's outcome. I also really enjoyed singing and dancing to the two songs I participated in."	"I auditioned for the play but did not make any part. I know I'm not a very good actor and that I get nervous in front of people and I expected that. That was my worst favourite part because I was very nervous and a little	"Exciting, intense, creative"	"Cheerful, enjoyable, amusing, bright, fun"	Yes "because you get to work with your friends and have a little break from some normal classes."	Yes "It's fun to watch people sing and dance and watch how hard they worked to make a great performance. The singing and dancing is also really fun to watch."

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Tanya: continued			but we also have to make sure everyone backstage is quiet and goes on at the right time.”		embar-rassed.”				
Tessa	“A village girl”	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Poster and program creation	“I learned the atmosphere of the play. And I learned the story of Fiddler on the Roof that I really enjoyed.”	“I love acting so definitely the acting, singing, and dancing was the thing I definitely most enjoy[ed]. Even though I was a small part I really learned from it and overall enjoyed the experience.”	“Um [sic] all of the parts of the play I really loved. I think the nervousness of getting on stage.”	“Fun! Great to see what other people are working on. Great for the experience.”	“GREAT! FUN! I think that the performance[s] were great and the best part was being on stage despite the nerveousness [sic].”	Yes “Because I Loved acting, singing, and dances.”	Yes “Because I feel that people can get better and better at plays. So I would like to watch them [to] get better.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Tina	"I was in the songs 'Match-maker' and 'To Life'."	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Other ("Slide-show")	"I learned how to be part of a musical. I learned technical [sic] information by working on the slideshow."	"I liked everything. I liked making the slideshow, singing in the musical, and watching the musical when I could. I liked it all."	"Memorizing the songs was hard, but singing with everyone made it easier."	"Fun, amusing, welcoming, friendly"	"Well done; hard worked; fun; good"	Yes "I would because it was very fun, although I would like to play a small part."	Yes "Only if it's a good play, and I would enjoy it more if it was students our age that we are watching."
Tindel	"A son"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I learned that you can forge bonds with other people. Everyone depends on everyone."	"Working with people, being as a group."	"There was sometimes bad transitions. Sometimes people yelled, etc."	"Amazing, fun, fantastic"	"Energetic, fantastic, excellence"	Yes "Amazing to work with people"	Yes "It is a great learning opportunities [sic]"
Trev	"Minor Character"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"That acting is fun. I wish that the schools could do more plays and musicals."	"was getting to know other people in the play. I also liked just acting and pretending to be someone I'm not."	"Nothing. It was a great musical."	"Fun, boring, inconvenient [sic], a necessity"	"Awesome, but not solo"	Yes "Because it is fun. It is also good practices"	No "I would rather be in it myself!"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Twyla	"Dance and Sing; Usher"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Props, Other ("Usher")	"I learned better ways to sing and how to turn the microphones off and on and to set up props."	"I enjoyed singing and dancing with my classmates. I also enjoyed being an usher with a few other people."	"I wish I would of [sic] tried out for a bigger role."	"Fun, because you got to make up dance moves with the teacher and experiment."	"Fun, energetic"	Yes "Because you can always learn from your mistakes and grow as you get older."	Yes "You can be inspired and learn new moves and songs!"
Unity	"Villager"	Singing, Dancing	"It takes hard work to memorize lyrics and dance steps. Also to put together a musical."	"It was fun to sing and dance."	"All the rehearsals [sic]"	"Boring, fun"	"Scary"	Yes "Because it was fun to be a part of a musical."	No "Sometimes it can be really boring."
Uttara	"Villager"	Singing, Dancing	"Learned how to sing high notes, tone; not one person can do it by thereself[sic] you need a team to accomplish something so big."	I enjoyed learning the dance moves and helping others when they didn't understand the parts or what to do."	"I enjoyed everything about the play and how it turned out."	"Organized, well thought of"	"Well put together, polished"	Yes "Because I learned many things about myself."	Yes "Because they teach you skills for plays in the future."

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Valarie	“Props manager/ Villager”	Singing, Dancing, Sets, Props	“Because I was props manager I learnt how a theatre runs backstage. I also learnt a lot about how to keep things organised.”	“I think that what I most enjoyed about the play was the fact that even though adults were running it, we got to contribute ideas, and do things our own way.”	[No answer]	“Fun; relaxed, but working attitude; social thing”	“Stressful, fun, exciting, crazy, awesome!”	Yes “Overall I think that it was an amazing experience [sic], and one that I would like to participate in again.”	Yes [no reason given]
Vi	“Sophie – a villager (flat character [sic])”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I don’t know.”	“I don’t know.”	“I didn’t like missing lunch for rehearsals, because none of my friends were [sic] in the play.”	“Boring, long”	“I don’t know.”	Yes “Because the end result is fun.”	Yes “because it is fun to watch the actors and maybe because they can be fun to watch.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Wendy	“Matchmaker and To Life”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned the process of what happens to plan for a musical.”	“I enjoyed the rehearsals and acting in front of crowds. It was all very fun, but the best part for me was the singing and dancing.”	“The rehearsals because I think that listening to instructions. [...sic: incomplete response]”	“Boring”	“Acting in front of crowds; exciting”	Yes “Because I plan to become a famous actress. I’m planning to take acting classes some day.”	No “I prefer watching musicals when I know and understand the [not complete]”
Wesley	“Perchik”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned that I’m not the best actor in the world so don’t act like one.”	“About making new friends and when you weren’t acting hanging out with them.”	“I don’t know.”	“Enthusiastic, fun, excitin [sic], sometimes boring, and relaxing.”	“Thrilling, nervous, fun.”	Yes “because I would like to get more experiance [sic] as an actor.”	Yes “because it is fun to watch other musicals and get feed back on how the actors act.”
Wentworth	“Moiche – 3 rd son”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned how to sing better, learn acting techniques and how to interact with the audience.”	“What I liked the most was singing and dancing to the first song in the play.”	“The thing that I didn’t enjoy at all was practicing, but it did make me have a better performance.”	“Very boring, sometimes fun, and annoying”	“Excellent, a huge hit, very good, and funny.”	Yes “Because I really enjoy music and love to act.”	No “Because I like to participate in everything I enjoy.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Xavier	"The sons"	Acting, Singing ("especially this one"), Dancing ("this one too!"), Poster and program creation, Sets, Props, Other [not specifically defined]	"Acting's an interesting concept. It involves participating in a dramatic imitation of real life, with spectators evaluating your progress."	"I enjoy the idea of being a part of the musical in itself: being able to contribute to a cause is a wonderful thing."	"I didn't enjoy enduring the rehearsals, especially since I was a minor participant."	"experience, performing, arts, practice, interesting"	"exciting, fun, nervous, performing arts"	Yes "It is a new experience that I enjoy participating in."	Yes "I could learn new ideas from what other people do."
York	"Backup singer"	Singing	"I learned about how a big musical gets put on. Until then I only saw big plays."	"I enjoyed making new parts for our roles."	"When practice was not engaging."	"long, always active and engaging"	"satisfying, stage fright"	Yes "I regretted not trying for a more active role."	"I don't know."
Zahir	"I was a village son."	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I learned new and awesome songs."	"I enjoyed being up on stage in front of everybody and acting."	"There wasn't anything I didn't enjoy."	"Sometime boring, sometimes fun."	"Awesome, fun, amazing, nerve racking."	Yes "because I enjoy acting"	Yes "because I enjoy watching plays and musicals"

Appendix E: Summary of questionnaire responses from grade seven students

29 students out of 44 students (66%) responded. In total, 66 grade six and seven students out of a total of 88 (75%) responded.

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Aaron	“Con- stable”	Acting, Dancing	“I learned about musicals. This was the first, real experience in which I was able to attend.”	“I loved being part of a success. Everyone enjoyed our final result.”	“The amount of rehearsals we had to attend.”	“Funny, comical, enjoyable, hard work”	“well-prepped, over-prepared, funny, enjoyable, hard work”	Yes “I love being part of a group that really does a good job. It was a lot of fun the first time as well.”	Yes “The best part of the musical was watching the different scenes until our turn came.”
Asha	“Villager”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learnt that acting, singing and dancing are really fun. It was really fun to be able to use my different skills to make a play. I also learnt that I have a very loud speaking	“I really enjoyed dressing up and being with my friends while we acted. It is really fun to be able to be elaborate while you’re practicing and overdo things because that is	“It may have been how much time we needed to put into it – it may have been better to practice in school.”	“They were really fun because we got to act, sing, and dance. I enjoy practicing things especially when you’re with friends.”	“It was really fun and exciting. I really liked the energy on performance night.”	Yes “Definitely! It was very fun and you can learn a lot (from the actual musical and from people).”	Yes “I really enjoy watching live shows like TUTS [Theatre Under the Stars]. It’s neat to see how the actors can adjust to mistakes so easily.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Asha: continued			voice!”	what acting is all about.”					
Brandi	“Villager”	Acting, Singing, Other (“Villager”)	“how to act; having fun with my friends”	“wasting class time; it was a great experience”	“singing (I’m not good)”	“hard, fun, busy”	“good, people liked it, amusing”	No “I’m not good at memorizing lines”	No “I don’t like musicals”
Brenna	“Back-ground (side person), peasant, support cast”	Acting, Singing, Dancing (all “sort of”); Poster and program creation, Sets	“I learned team work. However, if you do not have a big part in the play, it is not very fun. I enjoy the music that we sing. I learned that even though I mostly sat, and stood, you need to work together and you need to take risks in a musical.”	“I enjoyed working on the sets the most. That was something I felt most comfortable with doing. I liked it because I was able to work on a certain [sic] part. I like to see the characters build their relationships with each other.”	“I think being on stage, I didn’t like the fact that we couldn’t sing a lot. I wished that it was a play that you try out for and not make it mandatory because the people that arn’t [sic] main part don’t get the musical experience that the main part people would get.”	“It really depends, for some you are always doing something, and if you don’t have a big part, then it’s mostly waiting and standing around.”	“Beautiful, everyone worked together, and showed that they cared about what they were doing. It’s a risk-taking experience.”	Yes or no “Joining in a play has always been something out of my comfort zone. I like to act but just for fun. I think everyone could do it, just some people are scared or get intimidated by the people that are known as ‘the best singers’ or ‘the best actors’.”	Yes “I like to see the effort and the drama that they put toward their character. I like to see it because it is interesting, it’s almost like TV, except better.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Dak-shesh	"Book-seller (minor)"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I learned a bit about Jewish culture and the persecution of the Jews."	"I enjoyed singing the theme song 'Tradition'."	"I did not enjoy singing the bar song 'La Chiam'."	"fun, entertaining, exciting"	"good, fun, nice"	Yes "I enjoyed singing in the musical"	Yes "I think that most musicals are very entertaining"
Donny	"Villager"	Singing, Dancing	"If you work hard and the play will be good."	"When we had our last day of our play."	"Rehearsing"	"Long and boring"	"Inteanse" [sic]	No "Don't like them"	No "Don't like plays"
Dylan	"Villager"	Singing, Dancing	"Takes a lot of time and effort"	"missing class; hanging with friends"	"People making me sing and dance. Didn't enjoy spending all the time there even though I had a small part."	"Boring, lame, not fun, unenjoyable [sic], long"	"alright, funny"	No "I had a small part so it was boring for me"	No "Music is not my passion and I don't enjoy watching musicals"
Eryka	"Actor"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Poster and program creation, Sets	"I learned the script and that it is hard to make a musical"	"Preforming" [sic]	"Rehearsals"	"Waiting around"	"Smooth, rythmacl" [sic]	Yes "They are fun in general"	Yes "It is fun to watch"

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Felicity	“Shprintze”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“How to perform on stage; how to act – voice, expression”	“To entertain an audience with my talent; Dance, sing, & act; To meet new people and get to know them better”	“Missing extracurricular [sic] activities from outside of school”	“Organized; helpful”	“Believable; understandable; lively”	Yes “because I like to be part of musicals & I enjoy entertaining an audience”	Yes “because I like musicals & I like music”
Heather	“Stage Manager”	Sets, Props	“How to take charge of a situation and how to be a leader”	“Getting to know other peoples [sic] strengths and being able to appreciate my peers for other reasons”	[Left blank]	“Fun, energetic, hard working”	“Amazing”	Yes “because I had a really fun time and enjoyed seeing my other strengths”	Yes “because I find it fun and it is also easier to appreciate good musicals after being part of one”
Ian	“Sasha”	Acting, Singing	“I learned teamwork and dedication”	“I enjoyed working with my friends the most”	“I least enjoyed going to rehearsals” [sic]	“Boring, tiring, inconvenient”	“Tense, exciting”	Yes “I really enjoyed working with friends”	No “I get bored watching musicals”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Kaylee	“Soldier”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“That Russian dancing is hard and fun; I love to act; it is fun to be in a musical”	“Acting; dancing; singing”	“I was a man”	“Fun, exciting, entertaining, awesome”	“Fun, exciting, exhilarating [sic], energetic, awesome, amazing”	Yes “I love to act, I love to sing, I love to be in front of a crowd, I love to be the focus of attention”	Yes “It is a great learning experience, it would be very entertaining, it would be fun”
Konrad	“Class number”	Singing, Dancing	“You have to really [sic] practice and work together”	“Doing a performance with friends”	“All of the rehearsals and the singing”	“Repetitive [sic], long, silent”	“Well rehearsed”	No “I don’t like to sing and couldn’t make the rehearsals”	No “I don’t like to watch story’s [sic] sung”
Kirsten	“Hodel”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learnt a lot of self-confidence by singing and acting in front of a crowd. I also learnt a lot of teamwork skills”	“Being able to do something I really like (singing and acting) for an audience”	“Nothing”	“Fun, energetic, exciting”	“Adrenalin, fun, exciting, nervous”	Yes “It was the best time I had last year!”	Yes “They are fun to watch”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Lawson	"Hat seller (name unknown)"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Other ("Backstage")	"Work together; focus hard = good results"	"Preparation. Running through it as practice. Costumes"	"Bright lines shining at stage"	"Fun, exciting, semi formal, interactive"	"Good, looked professional, interesting"	No "Although the musical was a great experience [sic] I don't like being on a stage because I have stagefright."	Yes "because I like to see [sic] others act out because I can follow the storyline and I could see my peers performing."
Leila	"Male Soldier"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"That even a girl can play a man part"	"Dancing scene (bar); changing gender"	"Wearing the beard, and putting my hair up in my hat"	"Long, fun"	"Exciting, fun, seemed short"	Yes "Because I want to try acting a female role"	No "Because I want to be on the stage"
Lily	"Arguing about a mule. I was the wife"	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Poster and program creation, Sets	"I learned that it takes more than learning lines and singing to create a musical. I also learned that the dancing has to be very perfect or else everything in the play gets messy."	"I enjoyed taking part in the musical and to make a great show. I liked the fact as well as being an actor we were [sic] able to put in an effort & ideas about where/how it was going to work"	"It was awesome"	"Not boring, fun, a good learning experience"	"Good, very musical, good choice of a play"	Yes "because I like to sing, act, and dance."	Yes "because I love singing, dancing, and acting[;] even if I am watching it I still enjoy it."

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Louis	“Tevye”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“Acting skills, accents, singing skills, stage positions”	“Carving and widdling [sic] wood; carrying my cart; having a large family (in the play)”	“Waiting (long breaks); singing was tough but was worth it”	“Repetitive [sic]; you get to know who your [sic] working with a lot better”	“long, exciting, loud”	Yes “good fun and experience”	Yes “So I can learn and enjoy their performance”
Madeline	“Villager”	Singing, Poster and program creation, Sets, Props	“Learning a different style of music and art; working and cooperate with your classmates & peers”	“Working on the set design in the art club; designing the poster and program; be a part as a villager”	“The rehearsals because there were some changes that were made before the performance”	“hactic [sic], busy, unprepared, boring, confusion”	“pretty good, fun, prepared, right on time”	Yes “I would work on set designs and programs and also audition for roles that are interesting”	Yes “Watching others perform allows you to hear different styles of music and role play. Also, comparing each musical’s sets and props allows you to notice different media technique and styles.”

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Manjeet	“Villager”	Singing, Dancing	“I learned that I have ability to make a difference, even if it is by being a villager in a play.”	“That we all work together as one team and we are all having fun and learning at the same time; about ourselves and others.”	“That I didn’t get a major or minor role, I only came on when the whole grade was there.”	“Fun, enthusiastic, lively, and entertaining”	“Fun, nervous, exciting, interesting and amusing”	Yes “Because I had fun learning new parts and being part of [a] play, that I will always remember”	Yes “Because I learn from what they do; different and similar. This makes it all the more better”
Neelja	“Tzeitel”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned more about myself. I learned that I am more confident than I thought I was. I also learned more about acting, and singing. It also helped me learn and realize my passion for drama and music.”	“Some things I enjoyed most were learning how to act, and getting into character. It also helped me learn more about how a play works. I enjoyed this because usually I just watch plays, but this is like behind the scenes stuff. I think my	“I enjoyed all of it except the bright lights they shine down on us! They’re too bright!”	“Fun, learning experience, hard work, always have to be attentive and listening, makes you feel prepared, helpful”	“Nerve-racking, fun, constantly using your memory to remember what to do next, amazing, you get carried away with your character, like being in another world”	Yes “I would like to because it’s fun becoming another character, and going out in front of an audience and performing. It will also help me become more confident.”	Yes “Because you can learn by watching others perform. It is also fun and it broadens your mind.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Neelja: continued				favourite part was being able to become another person and forget about everything from my life.”					
Ophelia	Bielke	“Acting, Singing, Dancing, Props, Other (“the audition process”)	“how a scene is constructed and performed (with regards to things like blocking and the steps to a dance we had to learn/ memorize during a rehearsal so we could execute them on stage during the play); how a basic play is	“the thrill you get when standing on the stage and <u>having</u> to perform in front of all those people (if you don’t have an understudy, there’s no backing out) although some people would say this is the worst part, I found it thrilling and I	“the pressure during a live performance , nobody wants to mess up their lines and cause a chain reaction of missed cues & forgotten lines! However, this was something challenging that if you	“con-structive, fun, enjoyable, tolerable, dramatic, must get used to before you can be serious, time-consuming, hard work, enthusiasm, preparation, new; different, good	“exhilarating, stage, stage fright, music!, flawless, dramatic, serious, no talking, spotlight, audience’s eyes following every move, a better experience than rehearsal, although both are very valued events, fun (when the musical’s over!),	Yes “because it is such a good experience for everyone in the grade to be able to go through the same intense experience together – it’s both glorying and humbling, and very	Yes “I believe that my experience in this performance has made me more aware of the other stage plays and musicals (and operas) being performed in the Lower Mainland and has definitely increased my

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Ophelia: continued			formed: from the auditions to opening night; how to work together with the rest of the cast to make the play believable and emotional (working together made performing on cue easier and more encouraging).”	felt proud to have been able to perform and have a turn to bow at the end of the play; it made me feel part of something”	set your mind to it, you could easily overcome. There hardly was a moment where I wasn’t enjoying myself or having fun during this musical, pressure or no pressure (although repetitive and long rehearsals were a complete turn-off)”	experience in its own way”	bonding, togetherness, encouragement, pride, proud”	memorable of life in elementary school”	tolerance for different musical styles, and I can relate more personally to a play whenever I see one now because I’ve been through that process and I know all the things actors have on their minds, like cues and the location of props – this has made watching musicals more interesting”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Penelope	“Elizaveta”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learnt to cooperate with other people and to go with anything that comes at you, to go with your mistakes.”	“I enjoyed the positive atmosphere that was everywhere and within everyone.”	“If I need to choose one thing I didn’t like about the musical [it] would be that [sic] the transitions between scenes”	“Fun, exciting, positive, crazy, jam-packed, and surprising”	“Exciting, tense, nerve-wracking, thrilling, amazing, and captivating”	Yes “I had a lot of fun being with friends and seeing all of our practice and hard work pay off”	Yes “I think it’s great that everyone can experience an opportunity to make something beautiful”
Philip	“Lazar Wolf”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned that you have a responsibility [sic] showing up to every rehearsal [sic] and learning all of the lines to not let down the rest of the cast.”	“I most enjoyed taking time in school to work on the play to miss classes, making new friends I wouldn’t have, if I didn’t try out for the play.”	“The least thing I enjoyed was sitting around and watching other scenes that I am not in over and over again in rehearsal [sic]. Also the dancing[;] I did not think I would have to dance when I first tried out.”	“hectic, funny, boring, long, lots, enjoyable”	“exciting, scary, fun, nerve-racking”	Yes “They are fun to learn your lines and rehearse your scenes”	No “Well if the play is something that I am interested in then I would watch it. But if not they are kind of boring”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Quinn	“Yente the Match-maker”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned that I could act and sing fine in front of an audience and I really wasn’t scared to act in front of an audience.”	“I really liked being with my friends! They all make it really fun and it never got boring because they all always made me laugh! That was my favourite part about ‘Fiddler on the Roof.’”	“My least favourite part about being in the musical was rehearsing. I know you have to practice to get better but it was so tiring sometimes!”	“Depends, sometimes they were: fun, funny, boring, dull, or even both!”	“Fun, controlling, participation, I thought the performances were really fun!”	Yes “Because I really liked ‘Fiddler on the Roof.’ It was enjoyable and I felt like I really contributed to it!”	Yes “Because it’s amusing watching other people’s acting skills. I also like certain types of musicals!”
Rory	“Rabbi”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“That it is hard work; even a smaller role is a lot of work; it is very nerve racking; easy to forget your lines”	“The satisfaction of pulling it off; the acting; the costumes; the set”	“The long rehearsals; the endless blocking; the makeup; the nerve racking final performance”	“Light-hearted; long; hard work; a little boring sometimes; fun”	“Satisfying; relieved when its [sic] over; scared; nervous; cool; funny”	Yes “I would, but not as big of a part... I would because its [sic] fun, entertaining, and satisfying to pull off.”	Yes “They’re funny, entertaining, and you can laugh at people and learn from them.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Rudy	“Rabis [sic: Rabbi’s] son”	Acting, Singing, Dancing, Props	“I learnt how to do stage directions, how to sing and dance and act.”	“I liked the acting on stage.”	“I did not like having to wait behind stage for my part to happen.”	“Fun, exciting, loud, stressful, energetic”	“Fun, exciting, energetic, loud, stressful”	Yes “It was a lot of fun”	Yes “Because then I can think about if I could do that.”
Tabitha	“Golde”	Acting, Singing, Dancing	“I learned that I enjoy singing in front of people and that I love performing in front of an audience. I also learned that I work better in a group than alone.”	“I loved working at rehearsals and staging out an act and then running through it and getting it right. I [sic] gave us a sense that we had accomplished something and made the end show that much [more] rewarding.”	“The part I least enjoyed [was] the auditioning process because it was nerve-racking and there was a lot of pressure”	“Fun, enjoyable, constructive, helpful, important”	“Rewarding, fun, nerve-racking, important, tense”	Yes “Yes, I would but if I were to do it again, I would like to have a smaller role.”	Yes or No “I would like to watch others perform but it also depends on which musical it is and what kind of show (ex. Amateur etc.) it is.”

Name	What was your role in the musical?	[What] did you ... participate in as a result of this musical?	What did you learn by being a part of this musical?	What did you most enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What did you least enjoy about being a part of this musical?	What words would you use to describe the musical rehearsals?	What words would you use to describe the musical performances?	Would you like to participate in future school musicals?	Would you like to watch other groups performing musicals?
Tracy	"Esther, a Villager"	Acting, Singing, Dancing	"I learnt teamwork and how to act in a group. It helped me learn how to speak on stage and I was able to use actions."	"I most enjoyed acting with people. I mean that I liked being part of a group when everyone was acting. Although I didn't have a big part, it helped me learn how to <u>act</u> on stage."	"I least enjoyed probably the fact that we had to attend many rehearsals we weren't acting in. But that wasn't a big problem. I also wish that the villagers could have been incorporated in more [sic: more?] scenes. I think that before the auditions we should have had a few drama classes to learn how to act."	"Organized, disciplined, repetitive"	"Organized, well practiced"	Yes "In the older grades I would like to participate in a play because I would like to build on my acting skills after having drama for a couple of years."	Yes "I find them entertaining, fun to watch, and I can learn things."

Appendix F: Sample rehearsal schedule from *Fiddler on the Roof*

Fiddler on the Roof
Jan. 29th-Feb. 9th Rehearsal Schedule

Tues. Jan.30th After School	Wed. Jan31st Lunch – Day 2	Thurs. Feb 1st After School
<p>Scene 3 (Ms. Re)</p> <p>Scene 11</p> <p>Song: “Far From The Home I Love” (Ms. W, Mr. B)</p> <p>Song: “Miracle of Miracles” (Mr. N)</p>	<p>Scene 10 (Ms. Re)</p> <p>Song: “Do You Love Me?”</p> <p>Scene 1 (Ms. Ra)</p> <p>Song: “Matchmaker” (Mr. B, Ms. F)</p>	<p>Scene 14 (Ms. Re)</p> <p>Song: “Anatevka” (Mr. B, Ms. W)</p> <p>Song: “If I Were A Rich Man” (Mr. N)</p>
Fri. Feb 2nd Lunch – Day 4	Tues. Feb 6th After School	Thurs. Feb 8th Lunch – Day 2
<p>Scene: Prologue</p> <p>Song: “Tradition” (Ms. Re, Ms. Ra, Mr. B, Ms. W, Mr. N)</p>	<p>Scenes 8 and 9 (Ms. Ra)</p> <p>Scene 12 (Ms. W)</p> <p>Song: “Now I Have Everything” (Mr. B, Mr. N)</p>	<p>Scene 4 (Ms. Re)</p> <p>Song: “To Life” (Mr. N, Ms. Ra)</p> <p>Song: “Sunrise, Sunset” (Mr. B, Ms. W)</p>
Thurs. Feb 8th After School		
<p>Scene 15 (Ms. Re)</p> <p>Scene 2 (Ms. W, Mr. B)</p> <p>Song: “If I Were A Rich Man”</p> <p>Song: “Far From The Home I Love” (Ms. F, Mr. N)</p>		