The music and life of André Rieu for teacher professional development in a secondary school in South Africa

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Abstract: The attributes and characteristics which are elicited during performances of music artists can, by establishing interdisciplinary connections between the arts and education, serve as direction indicators for solutions to challenging situations that teachers encounter in their classrooms. While appreciating the artistry and performance of André Rieu and his orchestra, 32 teachers from a secondary school in Bloemfontein, South Africa, identified six positive themes of his artistry and behaviour that had, according to them, practical relevance and application value to their educational practice and professional development. This appreciative approach to teacher development is presented as an alternative to regular teacher training activities.

Keywords: André Rieu; appreciative inquiry; artistic attributes and characteristics; music performances; teacher professional development

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Training teachers is a challenge, but developing them further whilst in-service, is even harder. It requires an approach that is bold, interesting and engaging, and which would ultimately develop them in a meaningful manner. These requirements inspired the authors to consider an original approach for the further professional development of school teachers. It is an approach that they have not encountered evidence of in current literature: the use of a video recorded music concert of André Rieu and his orchestra. Thirty-two teachers from a secondary school in Bloemfontein, South Africa, were given the opportunity to appreciate the artistry and performance of André Rieu and his orchestra. The purpose of this exposure was for them to identify possible aspects of the musicians' artistry and behaviour that could have practical relevance and application value to their own educational practice and professional development. The teachers identified six applicable aspects in this regard.
1. Introduction

Bloch (2009, p. 58) and Jansen and Blank (2014, p. 25) paint a rather depressing picture of the state of South African schools, describing it as a national disaster: the education system works for about 20% of schools; the remaining 80% are marked by low pass rates and few university-level passes. The majority of schools are therefore not reaching their chief teaching objectives and on an international level, South African learners perform poorly in Mathematics and Literacy. According to the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) report on the performance of grade 9 learners in Mathematics and Science, South Africa was one of the five worst performing countries (HSRC, 2016). Regarding the causes of this unfortunate situation, Bloch (2009, p. 82) argues that the sheer number of people involved in the South African schooling system makes it difficult for principals and the education authorities to assume the burden of the administrative and academic support required of them. In 2013 there were 425 023 teachers and 12 489 648 learners in 25 720 schools (Department of Basic Education, 2015). In 2013 the Minister of Basic Education, Angelina Motshekga, admitted that 80% of these schools were dysfunctional (Motshekga, 2013). As a result, schools are often not well-organised, timetabling is poor, and institutional processes are arbitrary and ineffective (Bloch, 2009, p. 82–83).

Bloch (2009, p. 83) maintains that this state is hardly surprising when one considers the growth of extensive, lower-level schools, based on mere surface training received by teachers at teacher colleges. In a similar fashion, Pretorius and Von Maltitz (2010, p. 120–121) and Pretorius, Du Toit, Martin and Daries (2013, p. 72) argue that the South African education system is still suffering from the fragmented effects of apartheid and that the post-apartheid government is struggling to set schools in motion that can provide learners with authentic perspectives on the realities of their existence in a post-apartheid South Africa.

These are not the only challenges faced by South African teachers, though. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the growing diversity of learners, the greater integration of children with special education needs, and the increasing use of information and communication technologies all demand that teachers continuously need to upgrade their skills (OECD, 2014, p. 516). As a result, teacher training is increasingly seen as a process of lifelong learning. Continuous professional development provides a means for improving the quality of the teacher workforce and retaining effective staff over time. Professional development can encompass a whole range of activities: formal courses, seminars, conferences, workshops, online training, mentoring, and supervision (OECD, 2014, p. 518). The OECD reasons that these kinds of activities allow teachers to refresh, develop and broaden their knowledge and understanding of teaching, and to improve their skills and practices. It can help smooth teachers’ transition into their jobs and compensate for shortcomings in teachers’ initial preparation [our emphasis] (OECD, 2014, p. 516).

Feldman and McPhee (2008, p. 402) challenge this notion by putting a very basic question about professional development to in-service teachers: “... what can you do to become the best teacher you possibly can be?” They then anticipate the most likely response of many teachers as follows: “Well, I’ll attend an in-service or go to a seminar.” While they agree that this is widely accepted and the most common approach to professional development, they also find it an unfortunate situation, as: “In-service education, workshops, and other training formats are almost invariably short-term, many not longer than a half-day and some just an hour or so long. The idea that such short-term workshops are an effective means for improving teaching practice is another widely held myth in teacher education” (Feldman & McPhee, 2008, p. 402). They also argue that “(t)he learning that does occur is rarely solid enough to give teachers the confidence and skills they need to make consistent and sustainable improvements in what they do” (Feldman & McPhee, 2008, p. 403). In support of these arguments, Matherson and Windle (2017, p.31) found that in-service teachers want teacher-driven, continuous professional development that is sustained over time.
Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015, p. 211) identified four themes that serve as explanations as to why in-service teachers are hesitant to get involved in continuous professional development (CPD). The first concerns the school and Department of Education’s insufficient contribution with regards to CPD. Secondly, teachers are found to be reluctant to partake in CPD, while definite factors that prevent teachers to effectively partake in such development activities, constitute the third theme. Lastly, Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen emphasise the inadequate knowledge and competencies encountered in CPD programmes. When reflecting upon our own encounters with various in-service training formats, we feel saddened to support these arguments and observations: we, the authors, have ourselves suffered at the hands of incompetent presenters and the rather pointless contents of such training opportunities from which we could not benefit much.

Avalos (2011, p. 17) highlights the fact that there is a definite move away from the traditional in-service teaching training model. How then can in-service teachers be developed and empowered? It would be a futile exercise to subject the current set of professional development opportunities to severe criticism without providing a feasible alternative. Bloch (2009, p. 84) claims that teacher training institutions, though well-organised through the deans of education at universities, have not put into the public discourse a clear set of debates about the direction and needs for teacher training, be it pre-service or in-service teacher training. Greene, in Fontaine (2010, p. 67), argues for the power of film as an art form to reach students. According to Greene, film has the power to “disrupt categories, to introduce foreign singularities to viewer’s ears and eyes and minds”. We would like to suggest a similarly unconventional approach to the professional development of in-service teachers: the music arts in general, and more specifically a filmed recording of a concert performance by André Rieu and his orchestra, as used in our study and presented in this paper.

2. The arts—and André Rieu—for professional teacher development?
Considering the arts for teacher development might be a strange concept, as the arts have been marginalised in schools in terms of time and priority over many years, often being considered only as extra-curricular (Kenny, Finneran, & Mitchell, 2015, p. 164). If works of art are to be used for the purpose of teacher development, however, one would—as a matter of principle—have to provide some evidence of an overlap between these two seemingly unrelated fields. The critical thinker would surely have the right to ask: “How can one possibly learn about teaching from the arts?”

Read (1970, p. 7) suggests that the arts can be used to teach all subjects or fields: “... we have come to realize that we have in art an instrument of education and not merely a subject to be taught.” Art, he affirms (Read 1970, p. 8), “... is a way of education—not so much a subject to be taught as a method of teaching any or all subjects.” Adorno (1976, p. 5) holds that the listener “... hears beyond musical details, makes connections spontaneously, [...] he understands music about the way we understand our own language...” A musical performance like Rieu’s can now empower the audience member to make connections between the worlds of the arts and education. Beardsley, 1970, p. 6,7) argues that educationalists seek to establish illuminating connections—which he calls field-to-field cognitive illuminations: the artistic performance illuminates the field of education, with a unique set of problems and challenges.

We shall support our response to this question further by presenting an observation of Feldman and McPhee (2008, p. 126) about the opinion of experienced educators concerning the art of teaching:

...experienced instructors believe that no matter how much theory and research we now know and regardless of what advances may come in the future, ultimately teaching is and will always be an art. [...] For these experienced instructors, teaching will forever be as much
art as it is science, if not more so, calling for the qualities that are the hallmarks of any art—creativity, innovation, and imagination.

Feldman and McPhee (2008, p. 126) provide the very metaphor from the world of music performances to support the context of our study, as it describes the interrelatedness of music and teaching. When considering music as an art, the artist (musician) creates and expresses his music in a unique way. As a discipline, great effort goes into mastering it, as performing or composing necessitates a great deal of ability and dedication. However, even the most gifted musician will not perform without proper preparation. The novice will have to rely greatly on the theories and principles that underlie the art, while the knowledge and proficiency of the master will leave room for greater freedom and innovation.

The art of teaching expects much the same from each and every teacher. The teacher also creates his teaching based on his abilities and dedication in his own unique way: initially, by focusing greatly on the underlying theories for presentation, conduct, learner participation and assessment, but later allowing experience and his individual judgement to guide him in a more inclusive manner. However, successful a teacher orchestrates the content, context, participants and processes in a teaching situation, the sheer presence of live participants causes the interaction to vary, not only from day to day, but from moment to moment as the teacher adapts and adjusts the presentation to suit the variable inputs and responses from the learners.

Feldman and McPhee are supported by Bloch (2009, p. 104) when he holds that teaching is a difficult, complex, multifaceted and multi-layered art and science. According to Jansen (2011, p. 5) some educators see their classrooms as stages on which to act out the dramas of life and so teach about them. He calls them the life performers—those teachers who are energetic, with a flair for the dramatic. Figuratively, the teacher might be viewed as the conductor of an orchestra—in a classroom (Eisner, 1983, p. 10). André Rieu is the highly successful conductor of his own popular orchestra—in a theatre. Education might be explained metaphorically, and comprehended and studied as a form of performance. It seems that just like many other facets of life, the world of education can be illuminated by the world of the arts.

In this paper, we report on a study involving the artistic attributes and characteristics of internationally renowned performers for possible application in the teaching sphere. For the participants, the value of this endeavour lay in improving their educational practices by applying what they had learnt from the artists in their classrooms. Our affirmative topics—or purposes of the research, were not to facilitate the discovery of new theoretical knowledge about education, but first to appreciate the artistry of André Rieu for teacher professional development, and second to evaluate this innovative way of learning about education.

When one considers the choice of Rieu’s concert for the professional development of South African teachers, it might seem to be a rather puzzling choice. One of the critical readers of this article has indeed been disturbed by the social implications behind the notion of directing people of colour from disadvantaged school districts in South Africa to mine the genteel performances of André Rieu for professional development tips.

In response we shall point to the fact that the concert was conducted in South Africa, and that Kimi Skota, famous black South African lyrical soprano, also performed in the concert (see screen in Figure 2), giving it a distinct South African flavour. This was the main reason behind our choice, but we can also refer to the fact that Read (1970, p. 233) argues that the arts know no barriers of time and space. They constitute one language, he holds, and although he admits that this language has provincial accents, it is according to him essentially a language of symbols that communicates a meaning without hindrance from country to county and across the centuries.
3. The 5D-cycle of appreciative inquiry

The 5D-cycle of Appreciative Inquiry—Defining, Discovering, Dreaming, Designing and Destiny—and the underlying principles and philosophical paradigm thereof, served as the theoretical and methodological framework of this study (see Figure 1). We shall now summarise the fundamental nature of Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010, p. 1–2) give the following description of AI:

Appreciative Inquiry is the study of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal change and organization change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams are themselves transformational. In short, Appreciative Inquiry suggests that human organizing and change at its best is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation.

Because we wanted the participants to appreciate the strengths and successful strategies implemented by André Rieu and his orchestra for application in teaching and learning, our purpose was in line with the abovementioned essence of the AI process.
According to Watkins, Mohr and Kelly (2011, p. 68–75), the essential ingredients or DNA of AI comprise six principles with six generic processes. The principles are the constructionist, simultaneity, anticipatory, poetic and positive principles, as well as the overarching principle of wholeness.

The constructionist principle implies that the reality of an organisation or situation is constructed through social discourse, conversations between persons in the organisation or situation and the formation of an agreement about how they see that reality (Watkins et al., 2011, p. 72). They argue that the principle of simultaneity recognises that change and inquiry do not happen apart from each other, but that change is irrevocably linked to inquiry and happens with the asking of the very first question. The anticipatory principle holds that the most important sources to our disposal to affect organisational or situational change lie in the images that we can form of our future. Only a projection of positive expectations can result in positive change taking place. The authors of this article believed that the anticipatory principle would become operational during the discussions at the workshop and that it would result in positive change and an increasingly positive future on the side of the participants.

The poetic principle values storytelling as a means of obtaining information about an organisation or situation. It does not only focus on the facts at hand, but also on the feelings and experiences of the members of the organisation. The positive principle suggests that: “Positive affect is just as contagious as negative affect” (Watkins et al., 2011, p. 74). This is seen as important because momentum for change is born out of positive affect and social bonding within the organisation or teaching situation. The principle of wholeness unleashes potential and provides the opportunity for individuals to work together to improve and change. The idea of wholes that precede parts is fundamental in this principle.

These principles, which form the foundation of any appreciative inquiry, give way to five generic processes (Watkins et al., 2011, p. 82). The first is to choose the positive in a situation or a portrayal as the focus of the inquiry. The inquiry should secondly be into stories of life-giving forces, so as to act as a catalyst of immediate change. The location of themes that appear in stories, presentations or performances and the selection of topics for further inquiry constitute the third generic process, while the creation of shared images for a preferred future by the participants typifies the fourth generic process. The last process which completes the appreciative inquiry cycle involves the finding of innovative ways to create the identified change and preferred future.

4. Methodology
This study was mainly qualitative in nature and grounded in the Interpretivist Appreciative Inquiry paradigm. During the first phase of the 5D AI-cycle—the Define phase—the researchers formulated the affirmative topics: to appreciate the artistry of André Rieu for teacher professional development, and to evaluate this innovative way of learning about education (see Figure 1).

Thirty-two educators from a secondary school in Bloemfontein, South Africa, participated in a 4-h Appreciative Inquiry research workshop about a South African concert by André Rieu and his orchestra. They were formally invited by the researchers and each participant provided written consent to, and an understanding of, the following: agreement to participate in the mentioned workshop and consequent research study; what the study was about; why they were participating; what the risks and benefits were; and that they gave the researchers permission to use the data and photos gathered from their participation. The headmaster of the school furthermore asked permission from the District Director of Education in the Motheo Education District to release the teachers from their teaching responsibilities to attend the said workshop.

In line with the 5D AI-cycle (see Figure 1), the Discovery phase commenced as the educators were given the opportunity to appreciate an hour-long extract of items performed at the very first South African concert of André Rieu and his orchestra (see Figure 2). The
appreciation and ensuing workshop was held in the auditorium and venues of the School of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

This documentary-concert DVD (Weyrich, 2010) also included comments and opinions of the concert goers, the organisers of the concert, staff of the hotel where the performers stayed, André Rieu’s son, as well as South African celebrities who attended the concert. While viewing the DVD-recording of the concert, the participants were given the opportunity to individually reflect on the artistry of the performers. An appreciative interview protocol, prepared by the researchers, was provided to the participants while viewing the DVD. It provided guidance regarding aspects to consider.

The participants were then asked to report (in writing) on their thoughts, insights and observations regarding the following questions provided in the interview protocol: why is this an excellent performance; what did they enjoy about the music; how does André Rieu contribute towards the excellent performance of this orchestra and the soloists; how did the choice of a South African soloist (Kimi Skota—see Figure 2) contribute to the success of the whole show; what did they find striking about the comments made by individuals in between the music items; which of these comments might be relevant or applicable to the educational situation at their school; which main aspects of this whole performance might be applied to the work they do as teachers at their school?

The purpose of this activity was to help the participants identify possible connections between the performance of André Rieu and his orchestra, and excellent teaching. Although we acknowledge that all participants do not necessarily appreciate orchestral music, they were, nonetheless, requested to identify positive attributes and characteristics—from the music, the performers, and the remarks and observations from the concert goers—that could contribute to their professional development. The music was only the medium which gave rise to a performance which the participants of the workshop had to observe and report on. The emphasis was therefore not on the choice of music as such, but rather on the resulting performance.

Figure 2. Participants viewing the André Rieu concert.
After watching the concert-DVD the researchers and participants moved to a spacious lecturing room which could accommodate group work (see Figure 3). Trapezium-shaped tables were arranged in circles to facilitate the group work. The 32 educators grouped themselves into five groups: four groups had six members each and the remaining group had eight members. Each group appointed a group leader.

Once seated and grouped, each participant had to pair up with a member in his/her group so as to conduct appreciative interviews. Based on their observations from the DVD, the participants were guided by appreciative interview questions included in the interview protocol to identify insights, stories or strengths that could give life to their classroom and school.

The paired interview questions included the following: which music item was their personal favourite and why did they prefer this specific one; which aspect of the performance did they value most and why; what characteristics of André Rieu and his orchestra’s performance might they apply in their classrooms; what would they say is the ONE thing that gives life to Rieu’s performance—the one thing without which it would simply not be the same; can they explain why André Rieu and so many people in the audience were crying; why is the interaction between André Rieu, his orchestra and the audience so successful; in their opinion, what can they as the staff of the school possibly take from the performance of André Rieu and his orchestra to improve their teaching; and what could Rieu possibly do to make his performance even better?

After completing the interviews, a process of locating the themes that emerged in the stories, started. Each participant had to decide on the one best insight, story or comment that he or she had heard and recorded during the interview. The group leaders then recorded these insights as interview summaries on the flip charts provided to each group and presented it to the whole audience of participants. There were thus five flip charts with interview summaries: four flip charts containing six insights and a fifth flip chart containing eight. For the purpose of presenting each
group’s findings to the whole audience, the flip charts were placed in a central position in the
venue so that everyone could see what was written on the charts.

After the presentations by the five group leaders, each participant was provided with six
stickers which they had to stick alongside their six preferred insights written on the flip charts.
The selected insights on the flip charts were then categorised by the researchers into six
constructs. Professor Gregory Thomas, associate professor in Science Education and graduate
cooridnator at the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton,
Alberta, Canada, assisted the researchers with the categorisation (see Figure 4). The six con-
structs represented the positive core of André Rieu’s artistry and the participants’ interpretation
of the attributes and characteristics of his performance that could be made applicable to their
professional development.

The design of a poster-sized visual collage by each of the five groups signalled the start of
the Dream phase of this Appreciative Inquiry (see Figure 1) and furthermore contributed to the
retention and realisation of application possibilities of the six positive themes. Each group had
to design a poster based on the discovered attributes and present it to the whole audience (see
Figure 5). The purpose of the collage-making exercise per group was to create a visual image of
the extraordinary teaching team that the participants envisaged or dreamed they could
become, based on the insights that they obtained from the performance of André Rieu and
his orchestra.

The last activity of the workshop involved the development of a provocative statement by
the whole participating group that would capture the essence of a teacher’s purpose and
drive in his/her teaching. The single-line statement had to be grounded in the activities of
the day and had to describe the participants’ envisaged teaching environment in an optimal
way. The following questions regarding the formulation of a provocative statement were
provided: does the statement stretch and challenge; are the consequences of the statement
desired; is the statement stated in affirmative, bold terms; is the provocative statement

written in the present tense? The design of a collage and the formulation of a provocative statement constituted the end of the Dream phase of the 5D-cycle.

The Design and Destiny phases of the 5D-cycle, which involved bringing-to-life the new images of the preferred future, were carried out at Dr Blok School. Since the execution of these two phases is voluntary and because the researchers did not want to put undue pressure on the staff, the authors opted to leave it to the management team of the school to initiate and execute it. Pretorius et al. (2013, p. 84) followed the same strategy, by not addressing the Design and Destiny phases, in a similar Appreciative Inquiry workshop with student teachers. They found guidance from Orem, Blinkert and Clancy (2007, p. 149) with respect to the implementation of this strategy: “We know as Appreciative Coaches how important it is for clients to influence their own destiny [our emphasis] by making choices and acting in ways that reflect their most positive core and their desired future.” Pretorius et al. (2013, p. 84) continued to explain and defend their decision by stating that the Design phase is unique to a situation and that the integration of its result in the Destiny phase should be the responsibility and personal initiative of the participants.

After completing the workshop, the participants completed a workshop evaluation form to assess the quality of the workshop and the impact thereof on their professional development. Eight Likert-scale items were included in the questionnaire and addressed the following aspects of the workshop: the level of preparation by the presenters, their communication skills, the effective use of technology, the relevance and possible practical application of the workshop content, the level of interest created, the time duration, and the method of preparation. Four open-ended items were also included in the questionnaire, namely: which aspect(s) of the workshop were experienced as most positive; which aspect(s) could be improved; which aspect(s) could have been changed or left out; and, were there any other aspects of teaching and learning that should have been discussed or have more information provided about?
The data from both the Likert-scale items (presented as percentages per response category) and the open-ended questions (presented as identified themes) were analysed by the researchers themselves. A draft version of the research report was submitted to and presented to, the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference in Ghent, Belgium (Junqueira & Pretorius, 2012) to elicit feedback from Appreciative Inquiry practitioners.

5. Results
The identification of one best insight, or story, or comment heard and recorded during the paired interviews, gave rise to the following data:

Group 1 identified the following six themes: a belief in what you do; cooperation between members; good preparation; communicating passion and emotion; communicating passion through body language; uniting your audience.

Group 2 identified these six themes: good preparation; providing good guidance; using an element of surprise to keep attention; passion and professionalism; perfectionism; the positive influence of a calm, friendly environment.

Group 3’s themes were the following: enjoying what you do; the appreciation of good work; providing opportunity for development; teamwork; passion and enthusiasm; showing emotion.

Group 4 contributed the following themes: discipline and commitment; teamwork; a burning passion for what you do; communication; appreciation; motivation and enthusiasm.

Group 5 was the eight-member group and they identified the following themes: teamwork; love what you do; emotional support; appreciating uniqueness; personality; appreciating each person’s contribution; the participation of your audience; inclusivity—making everyone feel welcome.

After each participant was given the opportunity to indicate his/her preferred six insights or stories on the flip charts, the researchers counted the votes and organised them into six positive themes. The themes are presented in Table 1. Of the 192 possible votes that could be cast, only 168 were made, indicating that some participants did not use all six their votes.

The identification of six positive themes led to the following question: would the positive themes identified by the participants really be valid in terms of contemporary educational theory and thus applicable to the professional development of educators? This was indeed the case, as all six themes could be embedded into educational theory, as indicated henceforth. We were also able to link the themes to André Rieu’s opinions in his biography, written by his wife Marjorie (Rieu, 2008). The insights and observations of the teacher-participants were therefore academically valid and sound.

| Number | Positive theme                                      | Count |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1.     | Passion and enthusiasm                              | 46    |
| 2.     | Teamwork                                            | 35    |
| 3.     | Inclusivity                                         | 28    |
| 4.     | Preparation, professionalism and personal development | 22    |
| 5.     | To be compassionate                                 | 21    |
| 6.     | Appreciation                                        | 16    |
|        |                                                     | 168   |
6. Discussion of the six themes

We shall now discuss and validate the six positive themes by connecting them to respected educational sources and to the experiences and opinions of Rieu (2008). None of these themes is novel in the field of education. What is new, however, is the manner in which they were identified by the participants during the workshop, namely, by finding connections between the professional attributes and characteristics of an André Rieu concert and those in education.

Passion and enthusiasm for their daily teaching tasks (see Table 1) scored the highest count. Feldman and McPhee (2008, p. 130) describe enthusiastic teachers as being excited about the subject they teach. They present the material in an engaging manner. They also challenge students at an appropriate level to keep learning interesting. Killen (2010, p. 141) describes an enthusiastic teacher in the same terms: "An enthusiastic teacher conveys to learners a feeling of involvement, excitement and interest. This message is transmitted in a variety of ways, including facial expression, gestures, body movements, eye movements and vocal characteristics."

André Rieu, in Rieu (2008, p. 9) also confirms this observation of the teachers in the following manner: "If you keep at it long enough (for about 40 years!), never give up, and—perhaps the most important thing—always enjoy what you’re doing, then sooner or later you’re bound to succeed." He confirms his and his wife Marjorie’s passion and love for their careers as a contributing factor to their success: "We both love our work, and that is a great incentive to carry on with it and put all our energy into making it succeed—especially when its success is so evident" (Rieu, 2008, p. 10). André Rieu (Rieu, 2008, p. 11) does warn his fans that doubts, fears, stress and disappointment are all unavoidable, but “[...] on the other hand, happiness, excitement and enthusiasm give you the strength to go on with your work, until at last, you succeed.”

To be able to work successfully as a team in order to produce a positive output, received the second highest count (see Table 1). Killen (2010, p. 38–39) confirms that the willingness to share and collaborate is an attribute of successful teachers. By collaborating and sharing ideas, successful teachers achieve their goals.

Killen (2010, p. 31) likewise confirms that inclusivity (see Table 1), the third positive theme identified by the participants, is an important component of significant learning. In this respect, inclusivity does not only refer to the inclusion of all cultural aspects but also values learners’ backgrounds, interests, insights and intelligences. Similarly, it gave André great joy when people became engaged in his first concerts. At a concert in Maastricht, early in his career, about 150 chairs were set up and occupied. An additional 400 people entered the venue and some even listened from outside (Rieu, 2008, p. 59). The news about the concerts spread quickly and people from neighbouring towns also started to attend. People came from far and wide for a unique experience (Rieu, 2008, p. 59), confirming the principle of inclusivity.

Preparation, professionalism and personal development were grouped together and could be summarised as professional development (see Table 1). Baden, Sanders and Fincher (2011, p. 372) describe professional development as any activity designed to assist professionals in three ways: to remain abreast of developments in their field, to enhance skills and knowledge, and to increase the breadth and depth of a person’s professional understanding so as to improve practice. Professional development in teacher training has a deeper and ongoing intention, as the enhanced professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators will, in turn, improve student learning.

In addition, André Rieu, in Rieu (2008, p. 10) has the following to say about his own commitment to professional development: “Even when we [him and his wife Marjorie] go for walks or when we’re on holiday, we often talk about music, thinking up new ideas for new programs or new texts, or discussing ideas for the new concert season, without really meaning to”. This commitment towards his professional development as an artist was cultivated in him as a young boy when his
mother insisted that he practised for an hour each day. His constant commitment led to gradual development and although it was forced at first, he confessed that it became easier to keep focused on his music studies the older he got (Rieu, 2008, p. 16).

Killen (2010, p. 38) considers the ability to be compassionate—the fifth positive theme identified by the participants (see Table 1)—as a pedagogical practice of excellent teachers: “They care about their learners. Teachers should respect all learners, be concerned about their welfare, have empathy with them and make them feel accepted and important (all factors that help to build the positive self-esteem of the learners)”. André’s compassion for people is illustrated by his opinion about the effect of music on them: “You can make people really happy with music, driving away their sorrow, pain and loneliness for a while and giving them the illusion, at least for a couple of hours, of a better life” (Rieu, 2008, p. 55).

Appreciation, the sixth and final theme identified by the participants (see Table 1), lies at the core of positive relationships within an organisation like a school. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010, p. 2) capture the essence of it effectively by describing appreciation as follows: “Appreciation has to do with recognition, valuing, and gratitude. The word appreciate is a verb that carries a double meaning, referring to both the act of recognition and the act of enhancing value”. In addition, Feldman and McPhee (2008, p. 130) provide four guidelines for the successful grounding of positive or appreciative relationships by successful teachers. They should treat students equally; establish rapport with students and create a sense of community in the classroom; honour and appreciate individual differences, and convey their confidence in their students’ abilities to learn.

The establishment of André Rieu’s first orchestra was made possible by people who sent sheet music which enabled Rieu and his orchestra to build up a repertoire. His appreciation is evident in the following: “I’m still grateful to all the people who sent us music back then, because without their help and of course that of the newspaper, [that published articles about the orchestra] it would have been difficult indeed to build up our repertoire” (Rieu, 2008, p. 53).

7. A critical evaluation of the workshop
The main purposes of our endeavour, as stated earlier, were first to appreciate the artistry of André Rieu for the professional development of teachers, and second to evaluate this innovative way of learning about education.

In the previous section about the discussion of the six themes, we addressed the exploration of an innovative way of learning about education. In this section, we analyse the participants’ responses to the eight Likert-scale items and the four open-ended items included in the post-workshop evaluation form. The purpose thereof was to establish the impact of the workshop on their professional development. Summaries of their responses are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

The majority of positive responses points towards a positive learning experience for the participants. More than 93% of the participants felt that the level of preparation by the presenters, their communication skills, the effective use of technology, the relevance and practical application of the content of the workshop, the level of interest created, and the method of preparation, were either “good” or “excellent”. We were particularly encouraged by the favourable responses towards the two items included to evaluate the relevance and practical application of the content of the workshop (94% either “good” or “excellent”) and the level of interest created (100% either “good” or “excellent”).

The results provide an indication of the success of the workshop. The only noteworthy exception was the duration of the workshop, where 17% of the participants felt that the time duration was “acceptable” instead of “good” or “excellent”. This is understandable if one considers the fact that the workshop was conducted on a Friday.
Responses to three of the four open-ended items have been arranged into themes and are reflected in Table 3. The fourth item, concerning aspects that the participants felt could be changed or left out, elicited no significant responses and are therefore not included in Table 3. This is another indication of the success of the workshop. Each bulletin Table 3 indicates a response from a participant regarding one of the items in the workshop evaluation form. A number in parentheses indicates multiple similar responses.

The first item regarding aspect(s) of the workshop that the participants experienced as most positive, could be arranged into two distinct themes, namely teamwork and a new way of learning. The 10 responses that “Teamwork was very positive” and the numerous responses regarding the participants’ satisfaction with the approach where content information was not provided but rather that the discovery thereof was facilitated, point to the fact that the presentation of an educational workshop with the aim of learning through appreciation, is indeed an effective approach.

The second item regarding aspect(s) of the workshop that could be improved on, were arranged into the organisation of groups and positive feedback, as themes. It appeared that the participants would have preferred to be grouped by the facilitators instead of the school principal. This was an indication that the participants had the need to get to know members of staff that they were not so familiar with, and thought that it could have been accomplished through the workshop.

The third item invited participants to mention any other aspects of teaching and learning that they would prefer to discuss or have more information about, and their responses were grouped into discipline and inclusivity. The need for workshops on discipline and inclusivity is apparent and much-needed in our South African educational context. The use of an AI-approach to address this need should be considered.
The workshop concluded with the formulation of a provocative statement by the whole participating group and read as follows: “Dr Blok—together into the future”. According to Vangrieken, Meredith, Packer and Kyndt (2016, p. 57) a member-oriented teaching community, such as the diverse teaching community at Dr Blok, with a set agenda—in this case, to experience a new approach to continuous teacher development—is better equipped to create a teaching community focused on professional development than a formal top-down teaching community. It seemed as if the participants departed from the workshop with renewed vigour for their daily tasks, and with new perspectives of their colleagues and the way in which their work could be done.

| Theme 1: Team work | Theme 1: Organisation of groups | Theme 1: Discipline |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Teamwork was very positive (X10). | The interaction between the different groups was limited. | Discipline of learners (X3). |
| It was very relaxing and you could see a side of your colleague that you did not know. | The home groups still led to the “clicks” staying together. | Motivation of teachers. |
| Putting the ideas on the table to be discussed. | The groups should be arranged. | Finances of a school and punishment. |
| Involvement of everyone was highly recognised and appreciated. | An icebreaker that includes the whole staff would work well to create more unity and relaxation. | Narrowing of the cultural gap and all accompanying elements. |
| Sharing ideas after the stressful week. | | How to overcome disrespect from learners. |
| Interview with your colleague. | | How to manage a classroom with grade 8 and 9 learners better. |
| Hereby we could see how differently we experience things. | | |
| How human relations between colleagues improved. | | |
| The opportunity everybody got to speak freely about what he/she thinks should happen to achieve success. | | |
| The presentations of the groups—what they took out of André’s show. | | |

| Theme 2: New way of learning | Theme 2: Positive feedback | Theme 2: Inclusivity |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Watching the music video/documentary was very inspirational (X5). | Excellent—well done! | How to handle psychological problems of learners. |
| The positive atmosphere, the show was a good intro, very nice food and venue. | I think the workshop was very good. | How to work in a normal school in reality—with learners with special needs as well as learners who should be in industrial schools. |
| The presentation. | Hardly anything. It was good and there was no aspect that needed improvement. | |
| The DVD of André Rieu and the fact that the facilitator could work around it. | It must happen more often. | |
| Introduction of a new medium to appreciate work. | Everything was clear and well-organised. | |
| The association we experienced with teaching; this was an amazing parallel. | Thank you! It was a real joy! | |
| We were led to discover solutions by ourselves (x2). | | |

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8. Conclusion

This study entailed guiding a group of teachers with diverse cultural backgrounds in a South African school to identify positive themes from the artistry of a popular classical musician. According to the teachers, the derived positive themes were applicable to their daily teaching activities. These insights regarding their professional development were accomplished through the process of Appreciative Inquiry. The 5D-cycle of AI has proven itself to be a suitable framework for this creative endeavour.

The study showed that common attributes and characteristics between the worlds of music arts and education can indeed be identified and validated by embedding them in current educational theory. Aesthetical and educational experiences and approaches that correlate with one another within these two domains, therefore, do exist. According to John Dewey, in Fontaine (2010, p. 63), individual experiences can be deemed educational, when it is made clear and intense; that which is considered a major function of art. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that the type of music used in this study can only be understood and appreciated by a certain type of individual. The participants in this study, though participating as teachers from a South African school, represented a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and languages. These included white, black, brown and Asian participants, communicating with each other in English, although their home languages differed. This successful multicultural approach showed that a study of this nature could bear fruit within a diverse group.

From the mostly positive feedback after the workshop we, the authors, feel encouraged to pursue this type of professional development further. Considering the participants’ responses, one can conclude that the main purpose of our study—an exploration of an innovative way of learning about education—was achieved. This does not mean that one should not be critical about the AI process. Critiques of AI have become more sophisticated in recent years, overcoming earlier critiques which came from people not conversant with the underlying theory. Bushe (2011, p. 10) indicates a common concern: that a focus on positive stories and experiences during the discovery phase could invalidate the negative organisational experiences of participants and repress potentially important and meaningful conversations that need to take place. Oliver’s critique of AI’s tendency towards decontextualized polarisation (2005, in Bushe, 2011, p. 10), where the positive and the negative are treated as having intrinsic meaning instead of acknowledging that what is positive to some maybe negative to others, goes to the heart of the matter. Social constructionists argue that such meanings cannot be pre-assigned by a third party; they only emerge in relationship and are multiple, partial and dynamic.

In response to this argument we, as authors, do not want to argue that AI practitioners like ourselves should deny that complex negative experiences and the interpretation thereof, are inherent parts of any organisation’s culture; we simply want to point out that many organisations and individuals can benefit from appreciative discussions about success stories and exceptional practices. In fact, we want to argue that a problem-solving approach towards the professional development of experienced teachers might carry the implicit message that these teachers’ best efforts are not good enough: a rather discouraging situation.

We regard the current crisis in South Africa’s schooling system (Gaza, 2012) which developed in spite of all the many problem-solving workshops and seminars held over the past 20 years, as an indication that an appreciative approach could add value to efforts to develop and improve practices in a non-threatening environment. We furthermore recognise the participants’ suggestions to improve the organisation of the groups in order to facilitate improved collaboration between the individuals at a school. We feel that the topics discipline and inclusivity, which were expressed as needs for further discussion, could be explored by the school management team as possible venues for further professional teacher development. The introduction of this methodology within the wider African context is indeed possible and could be the beginning of a fresh and interesting approach to in-service teacher training on the African continent.
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