Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence

Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence

Edited by

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Foreword

I feel privileged to be requested to write the foreword to this book entitled: *Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence,* a publication put together by the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The contributors to this book are seasoned scholars in their various fields with solid academic standing. Each of them has unveiled the most salient points in the emerging issues in multi-dimensional pedagogical perspective.

The three-module book, has been broken down into units, which no doubt provides a clear discussion of each of the topics. Of great interest are the first five units of the first module which engaged critical areas of teaching profession. The second module centres on lesson planning and methodology of teaching courses in Arts and Social sciences. Module three focuses on instructional materials for teaching and learning. This ranges from improvisation to utilisation of materials that could be gainfully used in the teaching of courses in Economics, Theatre Arts, History, Geography and Political science in Nigeria school system.

I wish to commend and congratulate the Dean and her team for coming up with this noble idea and nurturing it to fruition. The quality, readability and language used to convey ideas in this book will appeal to students, educational practitioners and general readers.

I therefore, strongly recommend the book as a special and general text for students at all levels as well as practising teachers in tertiary educational institutions.

Professor Olufemi A. Ojebiyi Faculty of Education University of The Gambia The Gambia.

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UNIT 3

Effective Music and Theatre Teaching in Africa's 21st Century: The Vidal Approach

Adeolu ABE Ph.D. & Paulina Omagu ADEOLU-ABE Ph.D

Introduction

Music and theatre are professional disciplines which require professional approaches for effective and efficient tutelage. Teaching of the subject cannot be carried-out the same way non-practical courses will be delivered. Impactful music and theatre teaching call for methodologies suitable for them. More importantly, developments as the world advances call for 'out-of-the-box' practices in the teaching of these subjects. It must be noted that music and theatre education in Nigeria seem lagging behind their counterparts in other nations who are rank equal with Nigeria, talk less of those that rank higher. Numerous issues such as poor funding, poor infrastructure, outdated curriculum, ineffective approach to teaching and learning, incompetent teachers, half baked high school leavers who are prospective undergraduate, government policies, 'the Nigerian factor' and many more are found to be responsible for the deprived music and theatre education in the country. Vidal (2012) in his study on African music teaching, ponders the dearth of African music among students and the approach to teaching of African music in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. His inquisitiveness looked into the development of an intra-ethnic, international, interregional and Pannational identity in African Music and an improved approach which can be actualized with a revisit, re-examination and re-evaluation of existing traditional music methodological strategies on the teaching music especially at the tertiary institutions. Therefore, the study specifically set out to review Vidal's proposition of methodology

in the teaching of African music as a basis for 21st century music and theatre teaching while it further to expand on the proposition to present robust teaching experience in an attempt to improve music and theatre education in Nigeria.

Music and theatre are natural endowment in man that form vital aspect of the human culture which grow as man develops. While man advances in these artistic forms, meaning and understanding cuts across general and specific ethics found in the culture. Experiences in nature form patterns in traditions and ethos which to large extent become practices within the culture upon which the specific understanding derivable in the art form stands. For instance, music which is regarded as universal language can also be understood differently from the perspective of another culture within the universality of its language. The seven tone scale is predominantly Western oriented but five tone scale system is principal in African music and while rhythmic music is largely dominant in African music, it is not so in Western music. In addition, elements such as chants, eulogy, praise singing are vital aspects in African theatre, these factors are largely played down in Western drama as informed by their culture. These among essential elements in African and Western cultures highlight the peculiarities that are found in the art forms for distinctiveness, hence a factor to be considered to achieve effective teaching and lucid understanding of the courses. Adelugba (2003) shed light on a factor in African art forms as different from the Western world's that, 'African art expresses 'art for life sake' as against 'art for art sake' which is the prevalent concept in the European parlance. African arts which include music (songs, instrumentation) drama, poetry, sculpture, painting, drawing, and so on, derive true meaning through the functionality nature of some other factors surrounding a specific art such as the spiritual, the social and cultural factor.

Western knowledge in music and theatre are vital in education for global projection. However, African body of knowledge and experience in these areas of art are very essential to effective education among Africans because it provides natural learning

experience to African learners upon which Western knowledge or foreign experience may be built. Therefore, for the teaching of African music Vidal (2012) asserted that "our teaching of African music at the tertiary level cannot be separated from our research orientation and methodology for it is the outcome of our research studies on African music that will eventually form the basis for the curriculum for the teaching of African music in schools". He further emphasized that "Western musicological teaching methods and approaches are too narrow to cope with the multidimensional aspects of African music". In many ramifications, the human experience and world view which are the peculiarity of immediate nature (regions, climate, vegetation ...) and societal interaction (political, social, cultural ...) among the people form the sense of understanding of concepts. Heterogeneity nature of Africans is one aspect which cannot be underplayed in music and theatre education to achieve effectiveness in Africa. Adedeji (2011) affirmed that the kind of experience which is only peculiar to Africa, is what gives African music its power, greatness and uniqueness. Theatre education in Nigeria however thrives in the approach of the Africa culture and world view in her education system, this is a major aspect that needs to be improved upon in music study. One pending concern in the situation is when the African musical or theatrical knowledge is not passed to the next generation, relegation and gradual eradication of cultural practices which made Africans unique people is inevitable. Massive modern encroachment is drastically rubbing Africans of their culture. Vidal (2012), observed that urbanization and modern transportation have brought foreign musical influences to the teaming African growing youths. Adedeji also noted Ekweme (1995) who projected very little of traditional music to be left for Africans within 50-100 years due to progressive drop in the practice of traditional music by today's children and youths.

African musical knowledge such as creative process (vocal and instrumental) in polyrhythms of West Africa, xylophone orchestra of the Chopi, the Jarawa's sharawa flute ensemble, vocal polyphony and homophony of Swazi Gogo, Birom and Yergam. Parallelism is

found among the Ijaw, Igbo, Akan Konkombo, Edo, Memba and Muele. Yoruba game songs as well as chants are all imperative knowledge that calls for research and eventual knowledge to be taught in music as established by Vidal. Positive cultural practices that make Africans dynamic and distinct in human race need to be at the fore in music and theatre research and teaching. It must however be noted that Nigerian theatre education has done well in this aspect and has expanded the scope of knowledge through the moving picture (the media).

Vidal (2012) concluded on research focus and dissemination of African based knowledge through the study on lives and works of African traditional ethnic musicians and their contributions to the development on African music. While research on aesthetics philosophical thoughts and ideas be emphasized, criticism evaluation and comparative study with European and Asian musical study should be made. This proposition concerning research focus and dissemination is highly commended, however, this must be noted as yet to be extensively attained. Since the awakening to researching and promoting African culture in education, especially music, the impart in dissemination and codification has perhaps been given little attention. This is evident in greater concentration on Western instrumental specialty, domination of Western style in musical elements, the domination of Western musical senses and tonality over African and so on continues till date. Despite valuable researches, Africa still struggles with implementing so much of the African knowledge discovered, as Western orientation dominates the Africans' worldview and educational knowledge system. Sociological and socio-cultural perspective of music as well as theatre is the basis for the descriptive method employed in the study which is a review of literature. The unit therefore aims at the following objectives; to give music and theatre improved approaches needed in education, to enhance better teaching and learning methods in music and theatre and to incorporate natural procedures in music and theatre education in Africa despite the increasing sophistication in modern technological advancement.

Curriculum Factor

In his study, Vidal pointed to the hegemony of Western oriented curriculum in Nigerian schools. He noted that colonial Nigeria had music education patterned after what obtained in Europe and America, Nigerian education subsequently served the need of the colonial administration rather than the need of the people. He stated that "It was clear that early music education in West Africa was meant to serve the interest of Western European missionaries rather than African interest, hence it was patterned after the European music system and its legacies continued today". Pre-independence Nigeria only had those who wanted to study music traveled to Western nations for training. It was until 1961 that the first Nigerian institution -University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established, to serve the needs of Nigerians. This gave Nigerians the opportunity to study music at home at the baccalaureate level. The institution adopted bi-cultural approach to music study. However, attempts at emphasising Nigerian culture through National curriculum conference for all levels of education in 1969 did not yield necessary result (Vidal, 2012). With the survey carried out among music students at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, he lamented the cultural vacuum created in the youths because of their alienation to African music, this he noted as a threat to African identity at the Pan-African level in the committee of nations. Quite unfortunately, the position of the curriculum stands almost the same in 2023, after more than two decades of Vidal's lamentation and almost five and half decades of various degree of review in curriculum mentioned in the country. The ignorance of learners in African music and culture is becoming a heart-cry. Africans becoming strange to her cultural heritage, yet can freely perform foreign style of music and display cultural expertise of foreign land which had been adopted through the Church, society, mass and social media. Nigerian music and theatre curriculum need radical review to effectively align with the cultural policy of the nation.

Teaching Approach - Vidal's Proposition

Based on the concern of the writer on the dearth of African musical knowledge and decrease in the practice of African music by emerging Africans, the following propositions were made and were meant to be developed in order to fill the gap; African musicianship, African music theory, African history, African music aesthetics, African music creative performance. Interestingly, some of these areas of African music knowledge have experienced research and improvement over the five and half decades in the discourse of the curriculum, giving music scholarship in Nigeria tremendous growth in the past few decades in terms of African music theory, African history and African music aesthetics. Evidences abound in number of literatures from researches within the nation's increasing music departments. Nonetheless, the effect seems not vividly translated into music education as Western musical knowledge approach however seems dominating the scene.

Vidal proposition included new technique in the teaching of African music, he borrowed from the natural process of learning the human language since music is regarded as a global language. In his words, "the new technique should follow the natural process by which a child learns a mother tongue language and by which also musicians in the traditional society were trained". The natural process which is based on the psycholinguistic developmental approach of Shinichi Suzuki makes learning easy and imbibing the knowledge pattern and skill needed for the study of music. Stating the technique which is based on a natural pattern, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Natural process of Child's learning

Listening

A child acquires proficiency of language by first listening to the mother and everyone around him or her for a number of months or years. One of the phenomena that catches the interest of a child is the sound he or she hears in the environment. Children are good listeners who observe the wonders of the lips, tongue, as well as facial expressions, thereafter, process them in their minds. Observation of children less than one-year-old by the researchers show that children are good listeners. A medically fit child naturally listens keenly to sound around him at the first stage (listening) over a period of time, after keen aural perception and observation by the child, he or she then proceeds to the second stage (oral engagement, speaking) without being told. Often times it amazes people around children how much they have learnt at a very early stage by just listening within a couple of months. This is also observed to be evident in some animals which are domesticated by humans to simulate human sound – the parrot or the dog. A domesticated parrot in the house was observed by the writers to be a good listener because it behaved like the child who listens and exhibits the second stage of language acquisition (speaking). Listening is a vital aspect of learning which should be dexterously explored. Despite natural talent in music and theatre, ability to listen will expand learners' horizon, therefore, good listening through exercises and tutoring should be encouraged. 'Aural and sight' and 'speech training' are courses in music and drama respectively which are meant to serve the listening purpose, they however need improvement in effective implementation. One of the ways in grooming musical competencies in most contemporary choir in churches is imitation which is based on listening, this technique is highly beneficial in music and theatre education. According to Luke 6:45 from the Holy Bible said quoting Jesus, 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure in his heart bringeth forth that which is evil, for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh'. Listening is like receiving and storing up substance into the heart, this will be multiplied later for robust output when properly deplored. Listening is fundamental to music and theatre education. To achieve effective listening however, learners need to be thought how to develop good listening skills into good listener. Listening may be active or passive. Ekweme (2008) listed three types of music listening which include sensuous, expressive and sheerly musical type.

Speaking

This is the second stage of language learning. It comes in after keen listening over a period of time. Speaking begins with attempts to pronounce syllables of what the child had heard over a period of time. Common syllables such as 'da', 'de', 'mo', 'me', 'ba', 'ma'... are attempted by an infant who had listened over time. Corrections and guide by parents and caregivers further help the child to put his or her syllables together to form words such as 'daddy', 'mummy', 'baba', 'mama'... the speaking continues to develop as the child grows, and the child continues to build vocabularies in different areas of the language to which he or she is exposed. Thereafter, advanced words, phrases and sentences are learnt. The child speaks, first by imitation of what he or she hears. What distinguishes the human child and the parrot in speaking is the humanity in the child which can clearly verbalise human language as against the parrot or even the domestic dog that only imitate the sound and not the human words. Music and theatre teaching can be improved in Africa when the second stage is applied after the first stage of listening is adequately carried out both within and outside the classroom.

Reading

A child conveniently reads what he or she had learnt in listening and speaking. Matching symbolic representation with verbal knowledge makes reading easier and interesting. A child learns recitation before he or she learns reading. Learning through songs in pre-school precedes learning to read and write. Students who learnt musical sound through listening and singing before learning the staff notation tend to understand the theory of music more than

those who do not. Similarly, those who knows how to play the keyboard instrument (piano, organ, harmonium or the electronic musical keyboard) seems to understand staff notation easier. Vocabularies acquired in the auditory senses are easier learnt in sight reading. In the same vein, adequate speech training in theatre by listening and speaking tend to produce desirable reading technics by learners. One of the importance of script reading at the first stage of rehearsal for drama production is designed to guide actors in correct pronunciation. The reading stage is therefore beneficial after listening and speaking.

Writing

The fourth stage of language learning, writing, becomes easy when the earlier three stages had been properly acquired. Writing helps convey thoughts or inspiration for others to read and for preservation. Thoughts, ideas or inspiration in sounds or words which are written are preserved for posterity, this is the hallmark of literacy (reading and writing). If the earlier stages have not been properly learnt, the last stage cannot be well established, this is because the earlier stages had provided perception which would have created ideas and images to be written, what and how it will be written. Perhaps one of the reasons for poor writing experienced among students generally today is weak or no opportunity to have learnt thoroughly the earlier stages.

While writing in theatre most often takes to general human language, writing in music requires special symbols beyond general language over which general language is written. Music writing therefore entails more than words, knowledge of music notation is required which would have been learnt at the earlier stages of language acquisition because music is a universal language.

The above stages as proposed by Vidal looks promising to help the African students more effectively possibly due to fundamentality of Africa's oral tradition which is still a factor in the 21st century in Africa. Vidal stressed that 'in our present technique of teaching music in tertiary level, we have reversed the language process by which a child learn the mother tongue, by starting with Writing-Reading-Speaking etc'. Teaching of music, adopting the mother's tongue approach as proposed by Vidal promises to be more effective. In his conclusion, he stressed that learning of African norms, traditions, cultures and values should be taught in our tertiary institutions in an organized and systematic fashion to fill the cultural vacuum in the life of the average urban African youth. He saw this as a task that African Universities and Colleges should be committed to in order to avoid the doom of extinction.

Challenges

Nigeria's music education reflects high level in Eurocentric ideals as evident in the curriculum. The foundation which emanates from Western orientation continues to affect this area of study despite the input of African music in education and numerous ethnomusicological study in Africa (Vidal, 2012). Theatre arts on the other side, even though with its influence in the society, its education on the local society seems lagging in adequate and appropriate societal development. These become areas of challenges in this study as the influence of education seem limited in these two areas of study. While theatre education has a greater level of significance in African culture within her curriculum, music curriculum needs to expand her importance in the African culture. Approach to teaching and learning therefore tends towards the influence of the curriculum which appears to be greater in foreign influence. This is a major concern and reflection in Vidal's submission as it affects the loss of the essence of Africanity. In addition, Olden & Gabriel (2015) echo Fafunwa's stand in the mode of communication in Nigeria's nursery education, which he stressed to be in mother tongue especially for the subject like science. Even though Vidal did not canvass for the use of mother tongue in his submission, his emphasis is the employment of the natural process in the learning of human language as a model in music education.

Remedies

The answers to the above challenges are not far-fetched, teachers are to be trained and retrained at workshops, seminars, conferences and refresher courses. To equip them ready to take on the challenge of implementing the Vidal approach to teach music and theatre in their institutions. Uniformity of the curriculum should be enforced while quality assurance mechanisms are put in place by government to ensure that every institutions pursue the attainment of the cultural policy of the nation. The learners are to be re-orientated on the need to preserve the identity of their nativity. So that it can be easier for them to accept the change in the pattern of their learning and imbibe new approaches that can make them fit into the world of work in and around the globe.

Conclusion

Music and theatre are professional disciplines that demand practical skills, yet success in music and theatre education goes beyond general theoretical approaches and practical methods which are established by scholars. Consideration of other factors which are culturally based are equally essential. This is the concern of some African scholars who opine that the African cultural bases are needed to carryout effective teaching and learning even in the modern world. Augustus Olatunji Vidal is a leading Nigerian musicologist whose proposition of learning African music through the natural process of learning human language, listening-speakingreading-writing provides a more fruitful output than the reverse which is often employed in the Nigerian institutions of music. His concern about the extinction of African culture was meted with ways to salvage the unfortunate situation using music as a yardstick. The review of his proposition in this unit covers music and theatre which are two related courses that inhibits culture. Adopting the language learning process for music and theatre teaching promises to be effective for African learners.

Recommendations

In the light of the above review and with the reality of modernity in the world, it is therefore necessary to consider 21st century skills as tools to be employed where necessary, following Vidal's propositions in order to achieve the much needed improvement in music as well as theatre education. The following recommendations are hereby suggested for lofty music and theatre education:

1. Practical-Theoretical Approach

As practical professions, music and theatre education deserve practical approach which is then followed by the theoretical undertone for validity. Employing different practical methods to teaching as identified by Oyekan (2000), teaching abstractive subject like music dominated in sound and theatre which reflect life will become better comprehended. Body of knowledge in these field becomes concretised earlier while the experience will likely be retained longer than the theoretical-practical approach often experienced. This is the core of Vidal's proposition.

2. 21st Century Skills

Vital abilities to succeed in contemporary day are illustrated in 21st century skills. These skills are critical tools in modern day which are divided into three; learning skills, literacy skills and life skills by Stauffer (2022). These are required for exceptional accomplishment in all fields of life. Figure 2 reveals Stauffer's classification of the 21st century skills. Application of these skills such as creativity, critical thinking, initiative, flexibility, media literacy, technological literacy among others are essential for effective music and theatre teaching in 21st century Africa.

3. Industrial-based Learning

Industrial-based learning is an attempt to reconcile school knowledge with the current industrial development. The rate of change experienced in the industrial world in contemporary society



Figure 2: Categories of 21st century skills *Source*: www.aeseducation.com

is drastically massive. Industrial revolution is at a high rate as this calls for attention in the educational sector. The practice of music and theatre as experienced few years ago in the world has drastically experienced phenomena change from analogue to digital equipment, from physical to virtual and from mono to multi-dimensions in many ramifications. These are as results of improved technological advancement birthed by scientific global development. These developments have radically influenced the music and theatre industry. It is therefore a necessity to consider industrial-based form of teaching and training in music and theatre to avoid obsolete skill and knowledge in the education sector and to give learners the confidence to fit into the work situation and reality after certification obtained through education. Africa education needs regular upgrade for up-to-date knowledge, however, it is more important that the knowledge industry (education) take the lead in advancing the real industry.

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