

COLLABORATION AS A TREND IN MUSICAL ARTS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES

Bernadette Chinedu Ugochukwu, Ph.D.

Introduction

The Commission for promoting quality education in Nigeria and for Nigerian Universities is known as “The National Universities Commission” (NUC) and was established in 1962 as advisory agency in 1974 became a statutory body meant to grant approval for the establishment of higher institutions for quality assurance of all academic programmes in Nigeria Universities. Recently, the Commission emphasized on collaboration of programmes/ researches among Universities and internationally by involving international bodies who will collaborate with Nigeria to improve University education. Professor Rasheed, the Secretary of NUC also said that Universities must explore international collaboration. According to him “higher education in Nigeria would only have a better future if Nigerian universities begin to explore ways of diversifying international collaboration” (www.nuc.edu.ng>varsities.

Nigerian universities are established under the Nigerian University law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, even though there are state and private universities, they all operate under the same law of the Federal Government of Nigeria with “Academic freedom” for effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts and research. The right to academic freedom is recognized in order to enable faculty members to carry on their roles (Taiwo 1982, p.160).With this act, universities established faculties and departments who offer different courses at the undergraduate levels. Based on this,

Professor W.W.C. Echezona, Dr. (Mrs) Edna Smith, Elsie Toffolon and others founded the premiere Department of Music with the establishment of Nigeria’s premier university, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) in 1961, the vision was supposedly to have a centre to offer basic training and

B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria..* skill acquisition for teachers, organists, singers and choirmasters to serve the various schools, churches and other related agencies in Nigeria (Nwankpa, 2014 p.2).

Music education was also established in the basic education of Nigerian schools with the aim of teaching “rudiments of numbers: letters, colours, shapes, forms among others, etc. through music and play and inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of ... music” (National policy on education, 2014, p.9). Music is therefore taken in the secondary school level where it is merged with Fine and Applied Art, Dance and Drama as “Cultural and Creative Arts”. At the tertiary level, it is chosen as option among all other university courses. As a course on its own and in so doing, musical art education is introduced to the other departments where it is meant to collaborate with other courses/departments of Arts/Humanities to achieve a common goal in education. Musical art education collaboration also involves institutions from outside the country.

This study examine the level of cooperation and collaborations among various units/departments in the university in musical art education with its scope of study on Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria with the view of achieving a global art education goals for the development of humanity.

Concept of Organization

Organizations are made up of people of different tribes and cultures which include the environment it occupies, products or services it renders, technology it employs so there can be no organization without people. An educational institution which is one of the organizations under discussion, has students as its products, the institution therefore exists because of the students and for the students for the achievement of its purpose. Indeed every organization must have a goal or purpose/objectives for its existence. It is important to say that no organization achieve goals alone without collaboration with another. As work is divided among the members of the organization, each group of people must take responsibility for performance which is also being coordinated to ensure that the organizations are working towards common goals. What this means according to Ukeje, Okorie and Nwagbara (1992) is that “These characteristics imply that an organization is

B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria..* peopled, that it is oriented towards the achievement of goals and that it employs specialization and coordination in order to achieve the goals. (P.2)

Collaboration

The working together by two or more people to complete a desired task or achieve a desired goal could be termed "Collaboration". Collaboration according to Nwamara and Lawal (2020) "could be perceived as when two or more authors combine ideas and thoughts with a sole aim of accomplishing a common goal" (p.55). Effective collaboration involves clear communication, trust, cooperation among the people or group involved with the aim of achieving a common goal. Collaboration could be in research work involving scholars in the same field such as in musical art education. Nwamara et al (2020) have said that "The concept of collaboration among researchers emanated from the need to authenticate content and encourage in depth research as well as cross fertilization of ideas among researchers" (p.53). Nwamara et al (2020) continued "collaboration occurs when a research paper is written by more than one author.... They share ideas and experiences and work together with a common goal" (p.53). Real collaboration involves everyone in that group with different ideas but working towards a common goal. This therefore indicates that there is no collaboration without accountability, which makes it strong. In collaboration, each group/person must be accountable for any action taken and cooperation among the groups is very important. Collaboration also means oneness, togetherness and unity.

Musial Arts Education Collaboration

"Musical arts education is such a discipline that deals with learning around the psychology and sociology of human and societal development. It involves teaching-learning experiences that centre on human activities that are capable of influencing development of healthy ... society (Idamoyibo, 2019 p.3). Musical arts education therefore "calls for the teaching, learning, integration, transmission and assimilation of musical knowledge to enhance individual's musical thought system, combining all aspects of musical arts in theory and practice. It proposes global or all round musical knowledge, musicianship and scholarship (Ibekwe, 2014 p.65).

Musical arts education when shared with other departments of same faculty yields a lot of interest among them, brings the departments together and makes

B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria..* them to share the same interest. Music as an art is very important and links to other courses and “in common with the other arts” (Okafor, 2005 p.190).

Collaborating with other arts/humanities is the strength of music education. It showcases what music has as an art. Performance workshop as a course is offered in most of the universities in Nigeria and this course is taught as elective course where other departments apart from those in art faculty choose each session, this is to enrich the various departments such as the primary education and adult education departments. Performance workshop comprise of dance, band, choir (African and western), opera, instrumental ensemble which allows students from other departments to showcase their individual talents. It provides avenue for student’s creativity and improvisation. According to Ibekwe (2014), “Ensemble performance in the Department of music ... has become something more than ordinary performance practice. It has offered a competitive ground for students to showcase their talents and creative potencies at different levels” (pp55 & 56).

Nwamara (2015) said that “Collaborative creativity in musical arts is traced to indigenous systems of African/Nigerian music making; hence the existence of terms like “collectivism” and “communicatarianism” (p.173). Music department always collaborate with the communities around in music performances. This indicates that higher education in Nigeria is increasingly showing interest in collaborative learning and teaching, even outside the university environment. The major reason is that collaboration has been identified as a “21st century workplace ability”. Especially in the arts which has become a prime tool for building skills in collaboration.

Students are meant to work together to accomplish shared goals in collaborative learning while the teacher teaches. Collaborative education involves cooperation. Categorically there are differences between cooperative learning and collaborative learning. In cooperative learning, students work independently while in collaborative learning, students work together and produce results.

It is no wonder that music, dance and theater all use the word “ensemble” to refer to a group working together. Students must learn that they need to help each other to meet the ensemble’s goals and that competition within a collaborative group doesn’t work. Students working collaboratively often end up teaching others something they have mastered. Helping someone

B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria.. else learn a choreographical sequence or the blocking for a scene reinforces one's own knowledge and skills ...Every member is obliged to get the work done. This is seen most clearly in performance which is the ultimate accountability for an ensemble (www.kennedy-center.org)*

To support the above:

Effective music collaboration consists of equal partnering in the planning, implementation, management and assessment among educators concerned in maintaining the integrity of music as a viable discipline and classroom teachers interested in providing enhancement of content as well as support for diverse learning styles (www.jstor.org).

Types of Musical Arts Education Collaboration

The types of collaborations that can exist in a musical art education include:

- a) Internal Collaboration: This type of collaboration exists within an organization such as schools/universities. This type helps students or members of the organization to share information and ideas to achieve a particular set goal.
- b) External Collaboration: This type involves individuals outside organizations which may be among two universities/schools or departments as the case may be; this way, an organization can feed another of good information where the other lacks such information.
- c) Team Collaboration: This is the most effective in musical arts education. In an ensemble of dance, choir, opera, band and orchestra, there are different lecturers/teachers meant for each of these areas. They work separately with their students and come together as a group (performance workshop/ensemble) to achieve a common goal.

Within the performance workshop/ensemble involving dance, choir, opera, band and orchestra, there is always a team leader/lecturer who is in charge while other lecturers in the dance, choir, etc teach with the common purpose of achieving a common goal.

Relevance of Collaborations in Musical Arts Education

From a musical perspective, collaboration affords students a more thorough and enriched musical arts education. It therefore means that collaboration in musical arts education is relevant in the following as it:

- brings people to learn from each other musically

B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria..*

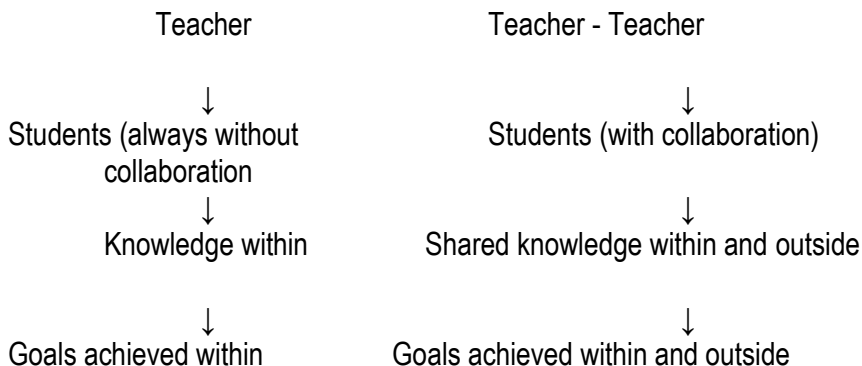
- makes organization such as (music) more effective
- helps to solve problems for a common goal
- brings organizational individuals closer and together
- makes individuals in a group to work as a team to achieve a purpose.

Students working together in an ensemble in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is a welcome development as collaboration. This course is made up of dance, choral (African & Western), opera and band. It is also important to state here that students from English, Fine and Applied Arts, Primary Education, Adult Education, Religious and Cultural Studies, Theatre Arts and French take this course as elective. There are always group studies where students are shared into groups in each of the areas chosen, learning as a group, showcasing talents and creating new ideas and sharing the ideas with others, by so doing, students learn new skills, ideas, knowledge from each other. They work with others to learn, especially during their rehearsals interdependently all contributing to achieve a set goal at the end of a semester. These act creates value for students and improve their performance skills.

Collaborative musical performances at times come as invitation to the department. An invitation by Alliance Francaise, Port Harcourt – Nigeria (Invitation to 2022 Fete De La Musique (World Music Day). Others are collaboration with the host community and companies around the community. Collaboration with a sister Institution (University of Port Harcourt) in performance, teaching and educational interactivensess. Another example is the Lecturer/Teacher collaboration with the sister Institution University of Port Harcourt in both undergraduate and graduate programmes.

Conclusion

Collaboration is a 'work tool' in musical arts education which improves musical performance in students' studies. Its effectiveness lies on group works working together to achieve academic set objectives and goals. There is cooperativeness in performance collaboration, seriousness is required, individual creativity and other necessary skills are required to help achieve a common goal which has made the arts a prime tool for building skills. Students are meant to work together to accomplish these shared goals in collaborative learning while teachers support.



Working alone with students in a particular institution/department without collaboration results in achieving set goals only within.

Recommendations

This study therefore recommends that departments, schools/faculties, Universities in Nigeria should be encouraged to work in collaboration with each other for a better future. Funds should be made available to also encourage and sponsor research collaborations in the field of Musical arts education in Nigeria.

References

- Ibekwe, E. U. (2014). Enhancing musical arts education through collaborative effort: The case of ensemble performance studies in the Department of Music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- Idamoyibo, O. (2017). Five decades of musical arts education in Nigerian universities: Issues of national consciousness (1961 – 2011). *Nsukka Journal of Musical Arts Research*, 4, (16), 1 – 24.
- Nwamara, A. O. (2015). Advancing ensemble music pedagogy in Nigeria through the application of indigenous knowledge systems and approaches: A composer's view on collaborative creativity. *Journal of Nigerian Music Education*, 7, 173-178.
- Nwamara, A. O. & Lawal, D. T. (2020). Documentation of musical practices: Efforts in collaborative Research. *Journal of the Association of Nigerian Musicologists*, 14, 62.

- B. C. Ugochukwu: *Collaboration as a Trend in Musical Arts Education in Nigeria..*
- Nwankpa, O. N. (2014). *Passover pedantry: Contesting the state of musical arts in Nigeria.* *Nsukka Journal of musical Arts Research*, 3, 1 – 12.
- Okafor, R. C. (2005). *Music in Nigerian society.* Nigeria New Generation Ventures Ltd.
- Taiwo, C. O. (1982). *The Nigerian education system: Past, present and future.* Thomas Nelson Ltd
- Susannah, (2009). *Collaboration with music: A noteworthy endeavour.* *Music Educators Journal*, 96, (1), 33 – 39
- Ukeje, B. O., Okorie, N.C. and Nwagbara, U.A. (1992). *Educational administration: Theory and Practice.* Totan Publishers Ltd.
- www.nuc.edu.ng/varsities must explore international collaborations. 14 April 2022
- [www.kennedy_centre.org/educatorsworkingtogether:Teachingcollaborationinthear](http://www.kennedy_centre.org/educatorsworkingtogether/Teachingcollaborationinthear) ts 14 April 2022
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable> 20 March 2022