

“Flip the coin” on Higher Music Education Multicultural Theory and Practice

Dr. Ronel De Villiers

University of Pretoria

Abstract

South African Higher Music Education (MusEd) are generally oriented towards the value of music theoretical accumulation followed by the development of practical skills. Theoretical principles usually lead to practical activities, rather than the reverse, but both are integrally interrelated. Seen through a Western paradigm, music functions by means of identifying various micro-MusEd elements and practical activities to construct a whole, whereas the African viewpoint utilises a holistic perspective as a starting point where the different aspects are immediately integrated into a whole. Analogously, the Ngoma principle – which applies to the Swahili culture – denotes a musical practice that embraces the simultaneous expression of several musical aspects. This demographic transformational process of multiculturalism in social society, led to the change of focus in the curriculum where processes and products of the practical ‘musicking’ together result in creative actions and outcomes. The practice changed from student teachers as passive consumers (teacher centred focus) towards active participants (student centred focus).

Samuel and Van Wyk Force Field Model (2008) provides the theoretical framework for this research. This model distinguishes between key forces that enable or constrain – also described as push and pull factors – positive and negative influences in the domain of professional teaching practice. The four forces that stem from this model are contextual (social, political and historical factors), institutional - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), biographical (authentic) and programmatic (curricula) forces. The research question is: How are the challenges (pushing forces) and opportunities (pulling forces) experienced by MusEd student teachers? This research adopts vignette research as a methodological approach and captures moments of learning as the student teachers actively engage in their learning experiences. The aim of the research is therefore to present a developmental outline towards Elliot’s *praxis* philosophy that are integrated with Dewey’s *experiential learning*, and linked to Spencer’s *action* theory in the pursuit of a social cohesion bouquet that will contribute meaningfully to the national and international scholarly education landscape.

Keywords: multicultural forces, curriculum paradigm, praxial learning, vignette methodology