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## MUSICAL ARTS EDUCATION AND VISION 2030 AGENDA: THE VOICE OF THE MUSICAL ARTS TEACHER FOR A SHIFT.

### Abstract

*Musical arts education over the years has been critiqued in literature because of the segmented nature of instruction where much emphasis is placed more on the basics of music – musical symbols, rhythm, intervals and harmony to mention few. Our thesis therefore is that 2030 agenda achievability is dependent on musical arts education's paradigm shift from its present form and situates it in contextualized teaching in line with vision 2030 agenda's tenet. Specifically the study sought answers to the following questions: (a) what was the awareness level of the musical arts teachers about vision 2030 agenda? (b) what were the challenges of teaching musical art in context of vision 2030 agenda? (c) what practical steps could be applied in musical arts teaching in view of vision 2030? The research adopted a qualitative research design. The population of the study was Musical Arts Teachers in Imo State. Snow ball technique of sampling was used to select the sample. Constructivism theory guided the study. Interview formed the primary data source while secondary sources were also used in addition for data collection. Thematic analysis was adopted for analyzing interview data. The study revealed low awareness level of the musical arts teachers' knowledge of vision 2030 agenda. There were no challenges because of the insignificant level of awareness of vision 2030; however, general music teaching challenges were enumerated as well as practical steps towards contextualizing instruction. This study has shown that musical arts education is potent in achieving the vision 2030 agenda however, teacher and methodology are crucial. Worrisome though, is the musical arts teachers' insignificant awareness level of the vision 2030 agenda. This study advocates a shift to contextual musical arts teaching. Workshops should be organized for musical arts teachers on the significance of vision 2030 agenda and how to contextualize their instructions towards achieving the vision.*

**Keywords:** *vision 2030, musical arts, sustainable education, contextualized teaching.*

### Introduction

The intersection of vision 2030 and musical arts education is glaring. The tenet of vision 2030 is building sustainability around people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership which careful analyses of music excerpts revolve around. The 2030 agenda is anchored on inclusivity that

strives to leave no one behind, envisaging “a world of universal respect for equality, including gender equality, by reaffirming the responsibilities of all states to “respect, protect and promote human rights without distinction of any. The 2015 world leaders’ meeting provided a holistic promise to secure the rights and well-being of everyone on a healthy, thriving planet and adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and its 17 sustainable development goals.

Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from Our Common Future, also known as Brundtland Report: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their needs.”

According to UNESCO 2014, “Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. It is an inclusion of key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It requires participatory and teaching methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. It consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.

Pedagogical approaches in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) encourages a shift towards active, participative, and experiential learning methods that engage the learner and make a real difference to their understanding, thinking and ability to act. Five pedagogic elements identified by Plymouth that cover a host of pedagogical approaches include: 1) Critical reflection, this includes the more traditional lecture, but also newer approaches such as reflexive accounts, learning journals, and discussion groups; 2) Systematic thinking and analysis- the use of real-world case studies and critical incidents, project based learning, stimulus activities, and the use of the campus as a learning resources; 3) Participatory learning lays emphasis on group or peer learning, developing dialogue, experiential learning, action research/learning to act, and developing case studies with local communities group and businesses; 4) Thinking creatively for future scenario deals with the use of role play, real-world inquiry, future visioning, problem-based learning, and providing space for emergency; and 5) Collaborative learning include contributions from guest speakers, work-based learning, interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary working, and collaborative learning and co-inquiry Contextualized teaching and learning (CTL) helps students gain a deeper understanding of subject matter by relating materials to meaningful situations that students encounter in real life. Contextual learning takes place when teachers present information so that students construct meaning from their own frame of experience. Simply, it is a learning approach that strives to enable students make meaning of their learning by applying it to real life situation. It is rooted in real life situation and problems. It encompasses: Situated cognition (all learning is applied knowledge); Social cognition (interpersonal constructs); Distributed cognition (constructs shaped outside the individual.

The characteristics of contextualized learning are as follows: emphasizing problem solving; recognizes teaching and learning need to occur in multiple contexts; assists students in learning how to become self-regulated learners; anchor teaching in the diverse life context of students; encourages students to learn from each other; employs authentic assessment. Contextualized instruction links the learning of fundamental skills with academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in specific context that is of interest to the student ([www.gavilan.edu.com](http://www.gavilan.edu.com)). For the purpose of this study, contextualized

teaching instead of anchoring on the interest of the student as stated supra it is rather situating instruction within the context of the 2030 agenda (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership).

Teaching generally and music teaching in particular in this era of sustainable development must involve integrating environmental, social, and economic principles into teaching to ensure that the present knowledge not only attain sustainability presently but in the future generation, teachers should emphasize critical thinking, problem solving and empathy. They can use real-life examples, engage students in discussions about global challenges, and promote active participation in sustainable practices.

The thesis of this study is that musical arts teacher is central to actualizing this vision through contextualizing instruction. In this age of education for sustainable development which is an inclusion of key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning like climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, sustainable consumption among other things, contextualizing instruction is not debatable. As has been stated above that pedagogical approaches in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) encourages a shift towards active, participative, and experiential learning methods, this study adopted one of the pedagogical method that dwells on thinking creatively for future scenario that makes use of role play, real-world inquiry, future visioning, problem-based learning and so forth.

Musical arts according to Nzewi (2007), is a holistic art consisting of music and its siblings: dance, drama, theatre and applied arts. In tradition, it is taught and practiced holistically. In the school system each of the arts siblings has its own department though housed in the same School (School of Arts) like in the institution understudy. School Musical Arts in the context of this study centers on the music aspect of the musical arts. The characteristic feature of the practice/performance of the musical arts is communal, collaborative, unity in diversity, dependence in independence, individuality in community.

Music is quite encompassing in sustainability construct but the problem is its teaching. Ugwu, (2018) reported that great numbers of Nigerian music scholars (Nzewi, 1988, Onyiuke, 2005, Adedeji, 2011, Olorunsogo 2015) have critiqued the theoretically based content of music curriculum and more so its teaching method and up until now, things have not significantly changed for the better. Ajamgbe, Ugwu, Ahanotu, (2023) proposed a paradigm shift in making African-sensed music education in Nigeria. The authors citing Nzewi (2019) stated that Africa-sensed music education is a projection of music education that leverages on the African thought pattern, which treats human wholeness as a totality: body, mind and soul (298). The present study opting for another shift shows the dynamic nature of the society and if education will serve the society it cannot otherwise but be dynamic. The global cry on sustainability of the present as well as the future generation cannot be turned a deaf ear to by musical arts educators hence suggestion to situate musical instruction in the 2030 agenda towards achieving the goal. Music excerpt especially African music has centered either on peace, or people well being, or on economy, or on environment however without educating the musical arts teachers about the vision they will be ignorant as it is commonly said that where purpose is not defined, abuse is inevitable. Hence there is a need to intimate them about the trending event.

Ogunrinade (2015) discussing on music education as a pillar for sustainable development stated the obvious that incorporating sustainable development into music education can be done by

exploring themes on environmental awareness, social justice, and cultural preservation through music. Further in his words stated that teachers can introduce students to songs that address these topics, encouraging them to analyze lyrics, melodies, and rhythms in the context of sustainability. Continuing, he added that students can create their own music compositions inspired by environmental concerns or societal issues, fostering creativity while raising awareness. By integrating sustainability into music education, music teachers can empower students to become advocates for positive change through their artistry (p.5). This present work agrees with the Ogunrinade's observation but wants to address his view further by trying it out in classroom setting. The former is suggestive while the later is practical as captured below.

For sometimes now our state – Imo State has been devastated by flood: school children are kept at home because flood has covered their school, houses are covered with flood, roads are flooded, farm crops are washed away by flood etc. Then a thought arose in the heart of the teacher which was thrown to the class as question. “What in our little corner can the musical arts teachers do towards contributing to solving the flood problem devastating our environment?” We engage our mind. Music speaks to the mind of both the little children, market women that block the water ways with dirt. Excerpt like *welie, welie* rose from such exercise and it is insightful. It is from this backdrop that the researchers advocate that teaching the musical arts in the now will embrace contextualized teaching. Part of this study was a project carried out in 2023 with 300 level NCE students.

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPIN**

### **Constructivism Defined**

The current wave on educational goals is on the higher cognitive skills (such as problem solving, thinking skills), affective (such as co-operation and solidarity), and meta-cognitive abilities that will enable the learner adapt freely in a rapidly changing world. The issue does not enforce it on the teacher with producing the knowledge rather on the learner as the producer of his/her knowledge. (Nwafor, 2007) Constructivism is a theory that stresses that the “learner actively construct knowledge by integrating new information and experiences into what they have previously come to understand, revising, and interpreting old knowledge in order to reconcile it with the new” ( Kerka, in Nwafor, 2007, p.74). It is actually the learner that does the job of constructing knowledge based on his previous experience. Knowledge construction takes place in a functional context, in a social context and is useful to him/her. Constructivism learning theory emphasises the active involvement of the learner in the construction of knowledge based on previous experience in a social learning environment.

The teacher in the constructivism perspective is an organizer of learning experience for the learner to produce his learning. The teacher is likened to a ‘coach who provides guidance that gradually decreases as the learners become more proficient, and who models, mediates, diagnoses, and scaffolds’. The teacher’s interest is on ‘uncovering meaning’ rather than dishing content. Knowing that all learners will not understand new concept the same way, he/she provides different varieties of learning experiences. He/she basis his/her new instruction on the learner’s previous knowledge.

Two theories of the constructivism learning for this study are discussed below which are Piaget’s theory of cognitive development and the Vygotsky social development theory

## Piaget's theory of cognitive development

Piaget's tenet for his intellectual development theory is that: a) Children have profound misconceptions about the world in general; b) the misconceptions appeared to be common to given age level; and c) that different age levels yield levels of comprehension and reasoning (Helms & Turner, in Nwafor, 2007, p.75). Arising from the above understanding, he came to a conclusion that intellectual development proceeds in an orderly sequence marked by growth stages which enable the child to attain intellectual maturity. His intellectual development theory is based on two very important principles: organization and adaptation. Organization as he perceived it is the ability of the child to order and classify new experiences in the mind into a perceived catalogue-card-like structure he called schemata. The schemata plays a role of organizing perceived events, procedures etc. according to organized patterns, not in pigeon-holes or files but by integrating new ones into building on old ones. Hence every learner comes into a learning environment with some schemata of previous experiences; meaningful learning must be built into previous learning. The schemata as he said are fluid or mobile and as a result can contain variety of experiences and can be restructured to accept or integrate newer experiences.

The restructuring of the schemata to categorize or integrate new experiences is facilitated by the process of adaptation. Adaptation he said helps the child to find meaning in his/her experiences through the processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation*. By the process of assimilation, the individual interprets new experiences in the light of his/her existing knowledge. When the new experiences does not exactly fit into the existing experiences in the mental structure of the individual, a state of disequilibrium or imbalance sets in tension in the mental organization of the individual. The need to find a balance between the old and the new experiences or to change the old ways of thinking to be able to solve new problems forces the individual into the process of *accommodation*, a process of restructuring the mental structure or changing the schemata to accommodate new experiences. This change is what makes for intellectual development. The ability of an individual to interpret his/her environment and construct or reconstruct schemata to accommodate new experiences facilitates mental or intellectual developments.

Though Piaget's categorization has been heavily criticized by people like Harward in (Hagreves, 1986) the mental processes of organization and adaptation show that learning is a process of constructing and reconstructing the mental organization to accommodate new experiences. It is a dynamic process through which learners acquire, construct or produce, store, retrieve and reconstruct knowledge by interacting with the environment or by relating the new experiences to the old ones. Hence individuals construct knowledge and the meaning they give to each can be very personal. (Nwafor, 2007)

Jerome Brunner's work on discovery learning and the advance organizer of Ausubel are considered out-growth of Piaget's cognitive development theory. which explains that the roles of the mind are (1) to process information and (2) store the information and so, if the learner is given the structure (or the map or web relating the concepts, ideas, principles, facts, theories etc) of the content or discipline to be learnt, often known to the experts, learning will be facilitated. The map or structure which he called *Advance Organizer* is to indicate that the map is produced in advance of the learning is used to get the learner set ready by expectation. It speeds up learning, enhances retention, organization and meaningful relationship between the new learning and already existing previous learning (Nwafor, 2007).

Jerome Brunner, on his part projected also the idea that every discipline has structure and the learner should be helped to see the structure with the aim of meaningful relating the contents and their various parts to previous learning. He developed the discovery teaching model which

emphasize aiding the learner to discover what is intended to be learnt through research, questioning, investigation and so on (Nwafor, 2007).

## **Vygotsky's social development theory**

Vygotsky in Nwafor (2007) views intellectual development as dependent on social and cultural contexts. He emphasized the followings: a) that language is an important social and cultural tool with which knowledge is constructed; b) that development is a continuous life process that has no stages and learning precedes development and not in the view of Piaget's stages of development; c) the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* he explained is the gap between what the learner currently knows or can do and what the learner is capable of, implying that what should be taught should be above the current status of the learner for new learning to take place and development to continue; and d) that the role of the knowledgeable (teacher or peer) who provides scaffolding in the instruction process (supports to guide the learner to the desired level and reduces [fades] the help as the learner progresses, sets new ZPD and evaluates the learner). (Nwafor, 2007, p. 77).

Vygotsky is of the view that ZPD contains these functions that have not yet matured, but would be possible to be done under the adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers (Park & Lee in Nwafor, 2007) The above statement implies that for the learner to move to another level of learning, the followings must occur: a) a slightly challenging learning ability, the accomplishment of which will force the learner to seek for help; b) contingent teaching which is provided at the point of request in response to the learner's performance; and c) the presence of adult guidance and or possibility of collaboration with more capable peers.

The learner requires deep understanding of his meta- cognitive skills and ability to engage in collaborative learning. Previous knowledge and skills will be applied to the challenging task until exhausted, demand for guidance/assistance will be made by the learner to allow for progress on the task and help or assistance will be readily provided at the point of need (contingent teaching) by the facilitators/collaborators. The previous experience will be reconstructed to accommodate new knowledge. Vygotsky in Nwafor (2007) emphasized the need for social environment of mutual respect where the learner is able to interact and reflect on what is being learned in relation to what others are doing or have done.

## **Cognitive apprenticeship**

The instructional model in constructivism that suits this study more is cognitive apprenticeship. This model is patterned after the traditional apprenticeship model. It combines observation, expert facilitation or tutelage (coaching) and practice. Four principles of cognitive apprenticeship are the content, method, sequence, and sociology (Wilson, Jonassen and Cole; Humes and Blair in Nwafor, 2007, p.82).

**Content** What is learnt here includes the higher cognitive skills, meta-cognitive skills and tacit skills. Tacit knowledge is covert type of knowledge that is usually not stressed in a course but is used by experts in a specific problem situation. It marks competency.

**Teaching method** The principle method is made up of modeling, coaching scaffolding, articulation, reflection, and exploration.

**Sequencing** This entails organization of learning objectives, content and materials to match the different learners' needs. Proceeding from simple to complex with increasing diversity as was illustrated in the ZPD of Vygotsky's learning theory.

**Sociology** The emphasis here is that learning should be situated in a relevant varied functional context where the skills will be applied as in real life situation such as interaction among learners and experts, stimulation of the intrinsic motives of the learner and encouragement of collaborative work among learners.

In the context of this study, going by the above assertion that learning is a process of constructing and reconstructing the mental organization to accommodate new experiences; a dynamic process through which learners acquire, construct or produce, store, retrieve and reconstruct knowledge by interacting with the environment or by relating the new experiences to the old ones, musical arts study in the light of sustainable development has to be guided by the recent trend for sustainability. The musical arts teacher as a facilitator exposes the learners to some social challenges like flood etc and allow the learners reflect on solving the problem using the previous knowledge of composing or performing the arts.

## Methodology

The research adopted a qualitative research design. The population of the study comprised the Upper Basic Musical Arts Teachers in Imo State. The essence of selecting only upper basic (Junior Secondary 1 – 3) is because music is not offered at the senior secondary. Snow ball technique of sampling was used to select the sample size. The primary data for this study arose from the interview with the musical art teachers with the instrumentation of interview guide and the project carried out in 2023 with NCE 300 level double major music students. The choice of this level of student is because they are the teachers that are prepared to teach in the basic schools. The National Certificate in education (NCE) which these students are offered at the end of their programme is the entry qualification into teaching profession in Nigeria.

## Results

The awareness level of the musical arts teachers about vision 2030 agenda was insignificant. Out of the 20 musical arts teachers sampled greater majority of them were ignorant of the agenda. Answering an interview question on the awareness of the agenda 2030, Chidinmma stated thus:

I am not aware of vision 2030 agenda and I am not instructing in that line.

There is no challenge encountered apart from the normal challenge of marginalized position of music in the curriculum, lack of musical instruments, negative attitude of school administrators and students to music.

Further question by the interviewer on how music can positively affect an environment she disclosed that, music can affect environment so much that their school environment at a time used to be very noisy then I composed a song on noise making. Blackmailing any noise maker and encouraging any student that maintain quietness. In fact the music went viral that the school Head mistress commended it. (Wednesday 3rd April, 2024).

Another interlocutor responding to the interview stated that she is not conversant with the 2030 agenda and as a result has no challenge with her teaching in that context. The major challenge she said is that there are few music teachers in my school. I alone covers the whole stand in the upper basic and the work is just too much for me. We lack musical

instruments as well. There are more teachers for the arts than they have for the music aspect of the Culture and Creative Arts. Another crucial thing is that by our training, we are trained as music teachers but in our schools we are mandated to teach music, drama and dance and it has been posing a big challenge.

In answer to research question two which focused on the challenges of music teaching in the context of vision 2030 showed no peculiar challenge except the normal or rather the while existing music teaching problems of : marginalized position of music in the curriculum, lack of music teachers, negative attitude of students, lack of musical instruments and so forth.

The practical steps adopted for the project were as follows:

- a) A discussion by the facilitator about the flood crisis that has devastated the state for some years as an introduction and discussion on the 2030 agenda;
- b) A show of some video clips on some flooded area;
- c) An assignment to the class to download some natural disaster in the recent time and discuss possible solution. This was done in the class;
- d) Assignment to compose music addressing any of the p's of vision 2030
- e) A performance of the excerpts in the class.

## Discussion of Results

The study found that there is low level of awareness of the musical arts teachers of vision 2030 agenda. Owing to their unawareness of the vision 2030 agenda they have continued to teach using their old method. In this age of sustainability there is a need to shift to the education for sustainable development paradigm which the teachers should adopt so that the vision of the agenda could be achieved.

It is crucial to note that in the course of the interview, even when greater majority were unaware of the 2030 agenda the challenges of time constraint, lack of resources were noted. These challenges are replete in literature (Alani, 2002; Obanya, 2004; Obioma 2013; Adegoun, 2015; Ugwu, 2018).

The practical aspect of this study were a) the teacher situate his instruction within any of the trusts of vision 2030 (peace, people, planet, prosperity, partnership) and discuss the intent with the class members. Downloaded video clips were such disaster was shared like flood disasters; b) the students were given assignment to search for similar video for discussion on solution; c) the teacher shared her musical excerpts and the students were to submit theirs as well. This project brought so many music composition like *atufukwala welie, welie welie*. This music cautions market women, students, general public against careless dropping of refuse.

The textual analysis of the above composition is

Solo	Chorus
Welie welie (pick up pick up)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw pick up)
Asim gi welie (I said you should pick up)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw, pick up)
Ide nmiri eruwela (erosion has set)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw pick up)
Owara nmiri ejula (gutters are filled up)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw, pick up)
Ubi asashia (farm crops are washed away)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw, pick up)
Umu akwukwo unu welie (students pick up)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw, pick up)
Ndi ahia welie welie (market people pick up)	Atufukwala welie (don't throw pick up)

Source: 2023 NCE music education class

The above music excerpt deals with erosion and a call to all and sundry to stop dropping refuse in inappropriate places as it block water passage that in turn cause flooding. For my music teaching, the form of the music is call and response. The key is F major with time signature of 4/4 beat in a bar. For lack of space, the staff analysis of the music would have been done and that will show at a glance the intervals, note values and so forth. This contextualized method of instruction not only that it will arouse students interest but it will be solving real life problem. In conclusion, shifting to contextual teaching is very crucial as it will bring awareness to the teachers as well as the students about the danger facing the environment, and as well solve prevalent problem. Contextual musical arts teaching makes for concrete learning as it will link the classroom instruction with real world situation. This makes for life long learning. The abstract musical arts instruction of learning the elements of music: intervals, musical symbols, harmony rhythm, melody and so forth is sacrificed as it is situated in a context of real life situation; vision 2030 agenda. This shift is imperative because Igbo adage says *onye aworo ala oga ebi n'igwe?* (meaning: if one is denied land will he leave in the sky?).

## Recommendations

- Shift to contextual musical arts instruction towards achieving vision 2030 agenda where music is taught in the context of real life situation and not in abstract form of musical elements;
- Workshop organized for musical arts teacher for creating awareness;
- Provision of fund for the workshop and provision of resources for instruction.

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