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Decolonizing the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Nguni Music Instruments in Higher Institutions of Learning in South Africa

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ABSTRACT
This is an ethnographic study which was carried out to determine appropriate and effective models, approaches, strategies and techniques, for the transmission of Indigenous African Music (IAM), as practised in the communities of Tsembeyi village in the Eastern Cape Province and Impunga Village in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa to the institutions of higher learning. The research explored pedagogical intervention measures for transplanting the teaching and learning of indigenous Nguni music instruments at Walter Sisulu University. This enquiry is underpinned by the praxial and Ubuntu theories, which ensure that participants are practically involved in doing, making, and experiencing learning as a collective. The study adopted an interpretive paradigm entrenched in a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews and participant observation were administered to collect data from 13 preservice music teachers including the main researcher and 3 community music experts drawn from the amaXhosa and AmaZulu, who are part of the Nguni nation in the Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. The thematic analysis revealed that the importance of engagement of the community in teaching and learning Nguni music instruments, underlying philosophical knowledge, and the understanding and approach to the construction and playing of IAM instruments. The authors argue for the possibility of breaking down the barriers of marginalization, and discrimination and celebrating human capabilities through the use of local resources and engagement of the community, thus, striking a meaningful and appropriate balance between the approaches that are used in traditional communities and institutions of higher learning.

Keywords: *Decolonization, Transmission, Curriculum, Indigenous African Music, and Nguni.*

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Introduction

The study investigates the transmission of Nguni [1] music into the university to probe approaches, strategies, and techniques for the passing of Indigenous African Music (IAM), mostly practised in the

[1] In South Africa, the historic Nguni kingdoms of the Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, and Swazi, are largely in the present-day provinces of the Eastern and Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The most notable of these kingdoms are the Xhosa Kingdom, a country that was well established prior to the 17th century and had existed for 11 generations before the start of the Frontier Wars in 1779, the ZuKingdom, which was ruled by King Shaka, a warrior whose conquest took place in the early nineteenth century. Swazi (or Swati) people live in both South Africa and Eswatini, while Ndebele people live in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Although each of these four cultures speaks a different language, they are all closely related, sharing many traditions and beliefs. In the past, and still in some traditional communities, men and women had distinctive roles. https://www.southafrica.com/blog/the-nguni-people-of-south-africa/. In the context

rural villages of South Africa to the institutions of higher learning. In this article, transmission involves the transfer of knowledge, skills, values and understanding between people. In this article, Nguni refers to Swazi, Ndebele, Xhosa and Zulu. Mapaya defines the concept of 'indigenous African music' interchangeably with 'indigenous music' or 'African music' when referring to an aggregation of regionally, customary, culturally and ethnically constituted African musical practice.[2] Post-1994 curriculum changes in South Africa are prescriptive of consciously raising the status of indigenous African music, both at universities and in the schooling system.[3] The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasize the idea of "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country" in an effort to free South African music education from what was once widely believed to be the dominant influences of Western music.[4] It is a huge achievement that in South Africa, CAPS gave more recognition to African music, hence the inclusion of IAM as a stream at the Further Education and Training (FET) Band.[5]

However, the music curricula at many universities in South Africa have revealed that the curriculum is biased, often highlighting Western at the expense of African music.[6] For example, the curricula focus on the works of composers such as Haydn, Bach and Mozart, at the expense of great musicians from Africa like the late Lucky Dube, Dorothy Masuka and Miriam Makeba. Carver posits that the transmission of IAM content that is learnt within the community by informal means into the formal structures of music education at university (my emphasis), is problematic.[7] In support of Carver, the authors believe that the passion for indigenous African music was suppressed by influences perpetuated by the apartheid system of education, which held Western art music in high esteem.[8] For instance, for their entire schooling and university education, the authors sang in the school choirs and attended Sunday school where hymns and choral music prevailed.

Key researchers looking into teaching IAM in the current schooling system, including Chipendo, Musakula, and Buthelezi, in an idea supported by McConnachie, reveal that post-democracy music education activism and scholarship in South Africa is still struggling to address the teaching and learning of IAM in the South African universities.[9] In South Africa, at the Further Education and Training (FET) Band, music has been streamed into three areas of expertise, labelled as Western Art Music (WAM), IAM, and Jazz. According to CAPS, schools are required to select music educators with Western training; however, teachers with specialized training in African music are not included. McConnachie reveals the efficacy of teaching IAM in South Africa through her experiences, observations of teachers and student teachers, and a comparison with the experience in Zimbabwe.[10] She posits that teachers in South Africa are not teaching the IAM stream as they feel unqualified. This is attributed to the challenge that teachers have not been trained to teach African instruments; they have been Western-trained.[11] Some institutions, like Walter Sisulu, have tended to rely on community music experts who are the custodians of the indigenous musical culture in their villages.

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of this article the Nguni cultural groups referred to are Ama Xhosa and AmaZulu, largely found in the Eastern and Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal provinces of South Africa..

[2] Madimabe Geoff Mapaya, "African Musicology: Towards Defining and Setting Parameters of the Study of the Indigenous African Music," *The Anthropologist* 18, no. 2 (2014): 619–27.

[3] Department of Basic Education, *National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, Music Further Education and Training Phase* (Cape Town: Government Printing Works, 2011).

[4] Department of Basic Education, *National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement..*, 5.

[5] Department of Basic Education, *National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement...*

[6] C. Chipendo, "Prejudices and Irrelevancy: The Dilemma Facing Music Curricula in Many South African Universities," *The Dyke* 8, no. 2 (2014): 37–53.

[7] Amanda Carver, "African Music, Knowledge, and Curriculum: Applying Bernsteinian and Legitimation Code Theory to South African Music Curricula," *PhD Diss., University of the Witwatersrand* (University of Witswaterand, 2020).

[8] Carver, "African Music, Knowledge, and Curriculum: Applying Bernsteinian and Legitimation Code Theory to South African Music Curricula."

[9] Chipendo, "Prejudices and Irrelevancy: The Dilemma Facing Music Curricula in Many South African Universities"; Franklins Mwansa Musakula, "African Music in Music Education: An Exploration into the Teaching of African Music in Two Primary Colleges of Education in Zambia" (Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale~…, 2014); Mbalenhle Penelope Buthelezi, "Music Education in South African Schools: Exploring Teachers' Experiences in the Teaching of Traditional African Music" (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016); Boudina McConnachie, "Indigenous and Traditional Musics in the School Classroom: A Re-Evaluation of the South African Indigenous African Music (IAM) Curriculum," *PhD Diss., Rhodes University. Http://Hdl. Handle. Net/10962/6806*, 2016.

[10] McConnachie, "Indigenous and Traditional Musics in the School Classroom..."

[11] McConnachie, "Indigenous and Traditional Musics in the School Classroom..."

In the same vein, Buthelezi highlights that regardless of the attempts to transform the South African education system, and the much-emphasised inclusion of African music, in practice, the university employment policies do not accommodate community musicians for teaching and learning indigenous music genres.[12] The paper is based on the growing evidence that, despite efforts to change the South African education system to give credence to African music, it is challenging to introduce IAM content that is learned through informal means in the community into formal structures of university music education.[13] The current scenario from the university is that the teaching and learning are approached from a Eurocentric perspective, hence previous studies noted little, or no success accomplished in the teaching and learning of IAM, thus, the need to enrich existing scholarship with alternative and useful methods and models for successful teaching of IAM.[14] This study seeks to determine the appropriate and effective models, approaches, strategies and techniques for the transmission of IAM that is usually practised in the community to the institutions of higher learning, in particular, the Nguni music instruments, to decolonize the curriculum and teaching and learning of IAM.

The concept of transmission of IAM teaching and learning from the communities to the institutions of higher learning has become a global concern, as well as in developing countries like South Africa.[15] It is also prudent to note that this article was driven by observation and awareness among scholars. For example, Carver contends that while African musical traditions may provide prospective curricular content, integrating community-based knowledge into the formal curriculum is difficult, resulting in the IAM stream's poor take-up.[16]

The authors, therefore, argue for teaching and learning approaches that look beyond the current Euro-centric teaching styles and incorporate the Masifundisane-engaged model of teaching and learning IAM at universities. The term ‘Masifundisane’ is an African term used by the Nguni people that refers to teaching each other while also learning from one another. In the context of this study, the model incorporates principles such as collective engagement, teaching and learning from each other, reflectivity and reflexivity, hereafter referred to as Masifundisane, with a gamut of values that are embedded in the Masifundisane model. The proposed Masifundisane engaged teaching and learning model emerged from the analysis of findings in a PhD study that was conducted by one of the authors.[17] As the name of the model suggests, WSU participants, the main researcher, and community music experts interacted, learning with, from and alongside each other[18].

Considering the Masifundisane-engaged learning approach, the study ensured a significant contribution to the existing literature, in response to the following research questions:

1. What are the possible pedagogical interventions that can be useful in transplanting indigenous Nguni music instruments in the university?
2. To what extent are the pedagogical intervention measures assisting in transplanting indigenous Nguni music instruments in the university?

To this end, music education activism and scholarship in South Africa is still struggling to address the teaching and learning of IAM and this research is an additional voice.

[12] Mbalenhle Penelope, Buthelezi. “Music Education in South African Schools: Exploring Teachers’ Experiences in the Teaching of Traditional African Music.” (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016).
[13] Carver, “African Music, Knowledge, and Curriculum: Applying Bernsteinian and Legitimation Code Theory to South African Music Curricula.”
[14] A.M. Carver, “ Separate Development: Curriculum Design in the New South Africa ,” *Paper Presented at the Contesting Freedoms Colloquium Held at UNISA* (Pretoria, South Africa, 2014).
[15] Carver, “ Separate Development: Curriculum Design in the New South Africa ”; Obert Ganyata, “Indigenous African Music and Multiculturalism in Zimbabwean Primary Schools: Toward an Experiential Open Class Pedagogy” (University of South Africa, 2020).
[16] Carver, “African Music, Knowledge, and Curriculum: Applying Bernsteinian and Legitimation Code Theory to South African Music Curricula.”
[17] K. Ngoma, “Indigenous African Music Curriculum in Universities: Exploring Possible Approaches of Teaching and Learning at Walter Sisulu University of South Africa” (University of Fort Hare, 2024).
[18] https://www.lollydaskal.com/leadership/learn-from-others/ accessed 16 May 2023

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been documented on the issue of the decolonisation of the curriculum, in general, and music has not been an exception. [19] Gopal defines 'decolonisation' as the process that marks the end of a foreign power's dominance and the recovery and/or construction of an 'independent' entity, usually a nation-state, through what is commonly referred to as a 'transfer of authority. [20] The world's most significant student protests that took place between 2015 and 2017 #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, focused on the curriculum itself, and not standards. Specifically, they addressed questions about what was taught, how it was taught, and how much or little people seemed to matter in the context of the #DecolonizeTheCurriculum debate.[21] The CHE (Council on Higher Education), a unit within the national Department of Higher Education that oversees the governance and policy regulation in institutions of Higher learning in South Africa, has also acknowledged that during the early stages of restructuring, curriculum modification was disregarded. However, #DecolonizeTheCurriculum has given many students a platform to express a deep and painful sense of inadequacy in solidarity with some academics. [22] The results of the colloquium discussions demonstrated that the student experience encompasses both the hidden and formal curriculums, as well as the communities that students return to after spending far too many years studying and the holistic development of young people.[23]

Some academics have conducted studies that problematize colonial dogmatism in schools and universities. Addressing the general marginalization of non-Western music in American music teacher education programs, an ethnographic study that focused on a West African drum and dance ensemble was carried out at Montclair State University. [24] This circumstance contradicts the vast social, cultural, situational, and musical diversity of American kids' lives. Following data analysis, three themes emerged. These are spirituality, community as oneness, and communal joy. These themes were linked to both the "lived reality" of the group as a whole and to the individual members, as well as the social-cultural teaching and learning processes involved.

Similarly, in a North American academy,[25] Dor observed that one of the colonial canons was a strong preference for academic qualifications over artistic expertise when hiring directors of West African drumming and dance.[26] Unfortunately, this colonial dogmatism in the academy affects even ways in which administrators must grapple with the recognition of competent indigenous African musicians hired as ensemble directors. Influenced by Dor's and Buthelezi's ideas on employment policies and related matters, in the context of this research, the definition closest to that of the author's South African Academy is equated to The Royal Spanish Academy's definition of an academy of a scientific, literary or artistic society established with public authority as a teaching establishment, whether public or private, of a professional, artistic, technical or simply practical nature.[27] The authors view an academy as a school or a university, private or public, formal or informal, and an organization that supports teaching and learning, of a particular subject and ensures that people are trained to acquire knowledge, skills and values for a particular job, particularly supporting the teaching of art, literature, and or science for knowledge creation,

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[19] Felix Maringe, "Transforming Knowledge Production Systems in the New African University," in *Knowledge and Change in African Universities* (Brill, 2017), 1–18; Luis Chávez and Russell P Skelchy, "Decolonization for Ethnomusicology and Music Studies in Higher Education.," *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education* 18, no. 3 (2019).

[20] Priyamvada Gopal, "On Decolonisation and the University," *Textual Practice* 35, no. 6 (June 3, 2021): 873–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2021.1929561.

[21] Lis Lange, "South African Universities between Decolonisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution," in *The Responsive University and the Crisis in South Africa* (Brill, 2021), 272–99.

[22] Education Deans Forum, "The Africanisation and Decolonization of Teacher Education in South Africa " (Emperors Palace Hotel, O.R. Tambo Int. Airport, 2017).

[23] Lange, "South African Universities between Decolonisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

[24] Marissa Silverman, "I Drum, I Sing, I Dance: An Ethnographic Study of a West African Drum and Dance Ensemble," *Research Studies in Music Education* 40, no. 1 (2018): 5–27.

[25] There are a plethora of definitions from a variety of sources on what an academy is, such as Merriam-Webster dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, dictionary.com and the Royal Spanish Academy definition. Academy is an old (Attic) Greek term (Ἀκαδήμεια; Koine Greek Ἀκαδημία) which refers to an institution of secondary or tertiary higher learning and generally also research or honorary membership. The name traces back to Plato's school of philosophy, founded approximately 386 BC at Akademia, a sanctuary of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and skill, north of Athens, Greece.

[26] George Worlasi Kwasi Dor, *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective* (Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2014).

[27] Dor, *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective*; Buthelezi, "Music Education in South African Schools: Exploring Teachers' Experiences in the Teaching of Traditional African Music."

production and dissemination. Its emphasis should be on advancing education, harnessing philosophical doctrines associated with a society of learned persons organized to collaboratively generate and produce scientific knowledge upon established opinions widely accepted as authoritative in a particular field.

Dor critiques the practice of recognizing all types of cultural capital through certificates and posits that equating two different systems can always be challenging, if not also problematic.[28] Consequently, universities are focusing their research on topics related to decolonization and the change in knowledge production and distribution. Continuing with the trajectory of problematics around the teaching of indigenous African instruments, Nota's study on the use and application of indigenous African instruments in the design of Zimbabwe's primary school music education curriculum, discovered several serious pedagogical difficulties that require immediate response.[29] Another source of concern is that the lack of indigenous African instruments in Zimbabwean elementary schools may be attributed to instructors' inadequate pedagogical ability. In contrast, Ibekwe conducted a study in Nigeria to find out how much emphasis was placed on teaching and learning African musical instruments as opposed to Western instruments.[30] The results suggested that there is still a need for improvement in African musical instrument pedagogy in postsecondary institutions. Thus, applicants who meet the requirements of Western art music are given preference for admission to higher institutions, and these applicants' training becomes the model for students' education. Kelly-McHale noted, “The choice of songs and other materials used in the music classroom is often rooted in the history of the music teacher, not that of the students”.[31]

Mapaya raised a concern that students aspiring to major in African music are compelled to study other kinds of music as a prerequisite to entering university.[32] Candidates who uphold the ideals of Western art music are given preference in the admissions process, and the programs set this instruction as the model for students' education. Additionally, Kelly-McHalle has noted that the prior experience of the music instructor, rather than the students', frequently influences the selection of songs and other resources used in the classroom.[33] In agreement with Mapaya, the authors believe that their passion for indigenous African music during their entire schooling and university education was suppressed by influences perpetuated by the apartheid system of education, which held Western art music in high esteem through insistent Western pedagogical and Eurocentric approaches to music education.[34]

Carver proposes a way to elevate African music as a knowledge practice by offering a theoretical frame to order its recontextualization in the curriculum.[35] Consequently, some scholars have vigorously responded by designing a university-level course to generate future teachers and culture-bearers who will possess a deeper understanding of, and feeling for, Indigenous African music and who, as a result, will be able to engage with African music through teaching and learning.[36] The course departs from the traditional university paradigm of tight course outlines and unchangeable outcomes by substituting a performance for an examination and having a less rigid framework.

In addition, the ‘Interactive Culture-Responsive Curriculum (ICRC)’ model emerged from Nota’s study.[37] The ICRC model values curriculum-based arts transactions within communities, which may present teachers with the opportunity to broaden their understanding of and proficiency with African indigenous music performance. Nota asserts that as music is a practice-based topic, experienced musicians from indigenous African communities ought to be invited to serve as music resource persons and

[28] Dor, *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective*.
[29] Charles Nota, “Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe” (University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2017).
[30] Eunice E Ibekwe, “African Musical Instruments Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions: A Case Study of the Department of Music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,” *PREORC Journal of Arts and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2018): 47–61.
[31] Jacqueline Kelly-McHale, “Equity in Music Education: Exclusionary Practices in Music Education,” *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 3 (March 9, 2018): 60, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432117744755.
[32] Madimabe Geoff Mapaya, “University-Based Music Training and Current South African Musical Praxis: Notes and Tones,” *African Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (2016): 47–67.
[33] Kelly-McHale, “Equity in Music Education: Exclusionary Practices in Music Education.”
[34] Mapaya, “University-Based Music Training and Current South African Musical Praxis: Notes and Tones.”
[35] Carver, “African Music, Knowledge, and Curriculum: Applying Bernsteinian and Legitimation Code Theory to South African Music Curricula.”
[36] Boudina McConnachie, “Reshaping Our Musical Values: Decolonising Teaching and Curricular Frameworks in the Eastern Cape,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 30, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 40–51, https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2021.1930090.
[37] Nota, “Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe.”

contribute to shaping Zimbabwe's current primary school music curriculum.[38] Experienced musicians can help students interpret indigenous music performances meaningfully because they are performers themselves.[39] Furthermore, field visits to the village are recommended by Nota for ongoing conversation and pedagogical exploration under the direction of seasoned indigenous African cultural arts practitioners in particular cultural arts groups.[40]

Oberhofer argues that instructors' formative musical experiences and background knowledge prolong the power of Western cultures in the arts and the marginal status of other music, promoting Western art music as the ideal aesthetic around which music programs should be constructed.[41] Nevertheless, Nota presents a different picture when he claims that his grandfather's intervention—also known as the "apprentice model"—was the reason he was able to acquire musical literacy.[42] Also, arts educators need to understand the relevance and use of culture while creating curricula for contemporary schools because it is a crucial component of teaching musical arts.

Three principles that would decolonize music studies are put out by Chaves and Skelchy: 1) decentring music studies from Western art music; 2) implementing decolonizing ways in research practice and the classroom; and 3) listening to and using Indigenous and non-Eurocentric methods and knowledge systems. Maringe, argues that the "decolonising teaching and pedagogy project has seen little change despite the turn towards decolonising the curriculum.[43] Some changes have occurred in subject disciplines such as history and language courses, with the introduction of African histories and the teaching of some indigenous languages.[44]

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This enquiry is underpinned by praxial and the *Ubuntu* theories, which state that participants are involved in practically doing, making and experiencing things as a collective. Paulo Freire through his educational liberating theory of praxial philosophy, expresses the ideology that the act of teaching and learning (praxis) is an encounter between 'action and reflection' whereby a teachable moment becomes a learning opportunity for both the teacher and the student to critically reflect on the action that ensues.[45] Freire's notion of the liberating praxis learning theory will enable the authors to explore teaching and learning approaches that can make the classrooms institutions that transform the position of the previously marginalized subject: IAM.[46] A problem-posing paradigm of education, proposed by Freire, is predicated on critical thinking, social transformation, and a horizontal relationship between teachers and students (co-intentionality).[47] He advocates for a transformative and democratic dynamic between students and educators, between students and education, and between students and the larger community. Thus, Freire's model of education proposes that when teachers and learners work together to identify the problems, analysing them through dialogue, as they reflect on the results of action previously taken, the problems can be rectified or overturned.[48] In South Africa, teaching and learning of IAM has been facing challenges, hence the need to explore approaches that will equip teachers in the schools and in the academy to identify problems and collaborate in finding solutions to make classrooms appropriate institutions of learning and teaching IAM. In turn, this further resulted in the critical analyses, evaluation, discussion and re-planning of lessons for better execution of practical skills for the teaching and learning of IAM.

It is at the level of interaction and interfacing through action and reflection (praxis) that the nature of a collaboration between those involved in teaching and learning will ensure success and this is where ubuntu theory intersects with Freire's praxis.[49] Letseka defines *Ubuntu* as an interactive ethic in which

[38] Nota, "Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe."
[39] Nota, "Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe."
[40] Nota, "Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe."
[41] Caitlin Oberhofer, "Decolonization and Indigenization in Music Education," *The Canadian Music Educator* 62, no. 1 (2020): 48–53.
[42] Nota, "Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe."
[43] Chávez and Skelchy, "Decolonization for Ethnomusicology and Music Studies in Higher Education."
[44] Chávez and Skelchy, "Decolonization for Ethnomusicology and Music Studies in Higher Education," 10.
[45] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books, 1993).
[46] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[47] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[48] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[49] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

our humanity is shaped by our interaction with others as co-dependents.[50] Letseka, on the other hand, advocates for Ubuntu or Botho as a normative principle, a moral theory that prescribes desirable and agreed human behaviour in a specific culture.[51] *Ubuntu* is practiced as people share the little that they have, including forms of knowledge existing outside academia.[52] It is a "humane notion" that is portrayed when persons living in communities treat each other with a sense of *Ubuntu/Botho*, which entails treating them with justice and fairness. The engagement between WSU participants and community experts combined the two communities into one - the IAM research community. There was trusted exploitative reciprocal mutuality. the relevance of Letseka's theory of Ubuntu when participants demonstrate moral values and cooperative skills during their engagement with cultural groups.[53]

The notion of *Ubuntu* is a communally desirable human behaviour that directs one's attitude and actions towards others and this eliminates selfish attitudes and self-centredness. However, the theoretical thrust in this study is invigorated by Letseka when she writes: "Certainly interpersonal skills have been shown to be an integral part of educating for *Ubuntu* and the promotion of communally accepted and desirable moral norms and virtues."[54] In this study, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is portrayed during the teaching and learning of IAM when participants engage with cultural groups, demonstrating moral values, and cooperative skills to promote and transmit cultural heritage during practical music-making with people.[55]

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an interpretive paradigm entrenched in a qualitative approach, using an ethnographic design to analyse the transmission of IAM through the behaviours and responses of 16 purposefully nominated participants. Interpretivism's foundation is based on universal qualities like people's understanding and interpretation of ordinary occurrences and societal systems, as well as their interpretations of phenomena. As stated by Kivunja and Kuyini, people's perceptions of reality hold greater significance than actual facts.[56] They also pointed out that interpretivist stances are predicated on the idea that reality is constructed by society.

Qualitative research, according to Creswell and Creswell, is a method of knowing that entails the following: word analysis, in-depth reporting of informants' perspectives, and study execution in a natural setting.[57] In accordance with Mack, qualitative methods are typically more flexible.[58] Qualitative techniques, for example, may ask questions that are not necessarily expressed the same way by each participant, allowing for greater spontaneity and flexibility in the interactions between the researcher and study participants.

The study was carried out through ethnographic research design, to determine the appropriate and effective models, approaches, strategies and techniques for the transmission of Indigenous African Music (IAM), mostly practised in the Tsembeyi and Impunga villages of the Eastern Cape to the institutions of higher learning. Sirek noted that ethnography is the appropriate research design to explore the relevant strategies and approaches to teaching IAM in the academy mainly because of its strength in answering the research questions.[59] Sirek suggests that through ethnography, teacher-researchers can gain useful information on meaningful and successful music teaching and curricula, in the same way, that the present

[50] Moeketsi Letseka, "African Philosophy and Educational Discourse," *African Voices in Education* 23, no. 2 (2000): 179–93.
[51] Moeketsi Letseka, "Anchoring Ubuntu Morality," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2013), https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n3p351.
[52] Lungile Mpetsheni, "Ubuntu-A Soteriological Ethic for an Effaced Umntu in a Post 1994 South Africa: A Black Theology of Liberation Perspective" (University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2019).
[53] Letseka, "Anchoring Ubuntu Morality."
[54] Letseka, "African Philosophy and Educational Discourse," 189.
[55] Letseka, "African Philosophy and Educational Discourse."
[56] Charles Kivunja and Ahmed Bawa Kuyini, "Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts.," *International Journal of Higher Education* 6, no. 5 (2017): 26–41.
[57] John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).
[58] Brenda M Mack, "Addressing Social Workers' Stress, Burnout, and Resiliency: A Qualitative Study with Supervisors," *Social Work Research* 46, no. 1 (February 25, 2022): 17–28, https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svab032.
[59] Danielle Sirek, "Turning Toward an Ethnographic Approach to Teaching: How Ethnography in the Music Classroom Can Inform Teaching Practice," *Canadian Music Educator* 57, no. 4 (2016): 17–21.

study seeks to capture the experiences of students during teaching and learning of IAM from the insider's point of view.[60]

The population for this study was a total of 16 purposefully selected participants, comprising 3 Xhosa community music experts, and 13 preservice music teachers, including the main researcher. Participants were predominantly Xhosa and Zulu-speaking. Participants of the research represented different ethnic, social and musical backgrounds; hence, it was essential for community experts to share their knowledge and explain about IAM. Participants who displayed specific characteristics such as interest, knowledge, and experience regarding the phenomenon under investigation were selected from various cultural groups. The research was carried out at the Walter Sisulu University and within the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

Semi-structured interviews and participant observation tools designed for this investigation were used with the 16 intentionally selected university students and local music specialists. Semi-structured interviews have the potential to provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation because the researcher can delve deeper and further to obtain rich data that will give positive results.[61] With permission from the participants, audio and video recordings of the six-month-long interviews and observations were made. The author read the participant responses multiple times, examined them closely, and grouped similar responses for ease of interpretation during the data analysis process. The themes that shaped the study's debate arose from this exercise.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings gathered from the analysis are organized into themes in this section. The issues were explored in light of the investigation's goals, which included determining the effectiveness of educational intervention strategies and how much they contribute to the preservation of traditional Nguni music instruments in educational institutions. The themes that emerged from the first objective displayed the usefulness of local resources, experiential learning and engagement of the community. From the second objective, a theme of values embedded in IAM, and a conducive environment displayed during the teaching and learning activities emerged. Table 1.1 below summarizes the objectives and themes of this enquiry.

Table 1.1: Objectives and Themes

Objective	Themes
Pedagogical intervention measures for transmitting indigenous Nguni music instruments in the academy	Use of local resources and community engagement
	Facilitation by community experts
The extent to which the pedagogical intervention measures assist in transplanting indigenous Nguni music instruments into the academy	Values embedded in IAM, and a conducive environment displayed during the teaching and learning activities

Objective 1: Pedagogical intervention measures for transmitting indigenous Nguni music instruments in the academy

Theme 1: Use of local resources and community engagement

One of the pedagogical intervention measures that can be used for constructing indigenous Nguni music instruments in the academy is the use of local resources. Interestingly, *Uhadi* seemed not to be constructed from original materials but from what is environmentally possible and available locally and *umasengwane* was constructed by WSU participants. The materials have changed over time. For example, *umasengwane* is currently made from a cut 20-litre oil plastic container and *uhadi* uses a copper wire whereas previously

[60] Sirek, "Turning Toward an Ethnographic Approach to Teaching: How Ethnography in the Music Classroom Can Inform Teaching Practice."
[61] John W Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (SAGE publications, 2014).

the twisted cow-tail hairs were used.[62] Data indicated the relevance of manufacturing IAM instruments such as *uhadi* (largely found amongst the Nguni people), from locally available materials. This is revealed, for example, when participants were engaged in lessons on constructing the calabash bow music instrument referred to as *uhadi* in isiXhosa. The musical instrument is hand-made from locally available materials such as a twenty-litre plastic bucket and a plastic bag. IAM instruments are man-made by hand, and, as a result, sound may not necessarily be the exact pitch. The same *uhadi* may vary in size and sound as they are individually made, compared to Western instruments that are made in a factory and are, therefore, able to produce the same pitch and same range. Further observations on another indigenous music instrument known as *umasengwane* (IsiXhosa = friction drum) were made. Seemingly, data confirms the adaptation and modernisation of the technique of constructing some of the IAM instruments as in the case of *uhadi* and *umasengwane.*

In illustration of the intertwining of practice and theory, the authors make an example of the instrument *uhadi.* In its original indigenous sense, *uhadi* was constructed and played by women in the Xhosa culture. However, according to Ibekwe, that could be changed, depending on whether the goal is different from the original aims of the Africans.[63] Notably, the calabash opening of *uhadi* is measured from the size of the breast of the person that will be playing the instrument, which emphasizes the original philosophy played and constructed by women.[64] To this end, Ibekwe suggests that the construction and playing of some IAM instruments seem to depict gender implications and this is not necessarily the case with Western music instruments.[65] "African musical instruments, simply put, are culturally controlled" because there are implied gender stipulations concerning who plays what instrument.[66] Ibekwe further posits that while some people have a tenacious belief in this gender-driven barrier, others have started to yield towards modernization, along with the current practice of playing *uhadi* by both male and female participants.[67]

Drawing from the ideas expressed by Dargie, Dontsa, and Ibekwe above, the authors argue that standardisation and modernisation of IAM instruments distort the cultural value, the philosophical and historical significance associated with the construction of the African instrument; for example, the reflection by Dargie on the breast size as the determinant factor for the size of the *uhadi* resonator (the calabash), speaks to gender dynamics in the making and playing of the indigenous musical instruments.[68] From the findings of this study, the authors contend that the modernization of indigenous African instruments may not be a good thing. The study provides evidence that the often-advocated standardisation in the construction of some of these African musical instruments, and the manipulated sound mechanism for a collective similarity in sound, defeat the scientific and cultural value attached to the construction and playing of some indigenous musical instruments. Some instruments like *uhadi*, *isitolotolo* and *umrhubhe*, which are found among the Nguni people, were meant for personal experience and livelihood rather than being instruments for collective music making, as in the case of *marimbas.* Nowadays, people want to create ensembles or orchestras out of *uhadi*, in the same way that violins are the frontline ensemble for the Western music orchestra.

This study turns now to the experimental evidence when WSU participants watched a tutorial from YouTube during their construction of *uhadi.* Data revealed disastrous results as *uhadi* did not produce the desired sound because the video instructor fell short in providing information about the type of wire appropriate for *uhadi* to ensure better sound quality. Interestingly, data brought to light the limitations of some elements of technology-based education during an attempt to learn about the construction of *uhadi* through the YouTube tutorial rather than a face-to-face demonstration lesson. This is especially so since IAM is generally not notated but typically transmitted orally from generation to generation.

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[62] Tandile Mandela, "The Revival and Revitalization of Musical Bow Practice in South Africa," 2005.
[63] Ibekwe, "African Musical Instruments Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions..."
[64] David John Dargie, "Techniques of Xhosa Music: A Study Based on the Music of the Lumko District," 1987.
[65] Ibekwe, "African Musical Instruments Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions..."
[66] Ibekwe, "African Musical Instruments Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions..." 13.
[67] Ibekwe, "African Musical Instruments Pedagogy in Tertiary Institutions..."
[68] Dargie, "Techniques of Xhosa Music: A Study Based on the Music of the Lumko District"; Luvuyo Dontsa, "From the Museum to the Music Classroom: Teaching the Umrhubhe as an Ensemble Instrument," *International Journal of Music Education* 26, no. 2 (2008): 177–90.

The participants' responses below expressed a lack of knowledge of the technique of tightening the wire for making the *uhadi* instrument. Participant S expressed his views.

> *"It will be much better when we understand the instrument that we're making, so we need more info about uhadi. So that xa sifaka ela cingo siyazi uba fanele silitsale kangakanani ukuze kuphume the right sound. Masingayi nqayi*." *(*so that we know how to tighten the wire to produce proper sound. We must not memorize*).*

Twani supports this notion when she argues that learners who are critical in their thinking dialogue with others and collaborate to find a solution.[69] Teaching and learning activities became opportunities for action and reflection for both teacher and learner to critically reflect on lessons. WSU participants' lack of experience and expertise indicated a need for guidance from those who know, the community music experts. The authors, therefore, posit that gaining access to technology-based lessons might be easy and informative, but one should be wary of its limitations compared to the visual and powerful oral transmission tradition in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in so far as indigenous African music is concerned.

The usefulness of going to the field to learn the music and its socially relevant activities was revealed when WSU participants attested to the fact that field trips and community experts were a resource for transmitting knowledge. WSU participants undertook field trips to Mthatha river banks wherein the community experts conducted lessons and shared their knowledge and skills. The participants were engaged in practically doing, making and experiencing things, rather than learning from theory and hearing about how things are done.[70] Participants' responses below indicate the benefits of working with community experts.

> *"It is very interesting and inspiring to learn from custodians because they are experts that grew up performing the music, they know the roots of African music and demonstrate the music with passion."* (Participant Z)

> *"Our hosts demonstrate their kindness and appreciation for recognition of their culture. Uba nawo umdla, ubabukele because bayazi demonstrator, uphinde nawe uyo participator pha*." (You get inspired, as you watch them because they demonstrate, and you join them as they perform). [Participant G]

The participants highlighted the acquisition of knowledge about the social function of IAM and the historical background of *ingoma* as well as developed awareness and the value of Nguni music. The field trip strategy enhanced the participants' knowledge and critical thinking skills and raised interest and understanding of IAM. The authors propose that field trips are tools to build relations, learn, and engage the custodians about their history and culture in the villages where the music is practised. This view is supported by Matiure's assertion, in McConnachie stating that "There are two ways of doing it: either you go into the society, or you bring the society into the institution."[71]

In most instances, the researcher became a co-learner who interacted and learned with, from, and alongside participants during the IAM activities. As participants were inspired, they took turns experimenting with playing *uhadi* and *imirhubhe* instruments. Words of appreciation for achievement were so well-expressed by the expert that within two and half hours, two participants had grasped the basic techniques of handling and playing the *uhadi* instrument. Nota supports the notion that most indigenous Africans who support cultural arts and are instrumentalists are musically literate and knowledgeable about pedagogy.[72] Active involvement of participants in constructing IAM instruments relates to Freire's praxis theory which describes praxis as action and reflection arising where theory and

[69] Zoliswa Twani, "Music behind Bars: Exploring the Role of Music as a Tool for Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Offenders at Mthatha Medium Correctional Centre," (University of the Witwatersrand, 2011), https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/bdcfacb3-040d-4691-a0d5-4cbc770cacc5.
[70] David James Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[71] McConnachie, "Indigenous and Traditional Musics in the School Classroom: A Re-Evaluation of the South African Indigenous African Music (IAM) Curriculum," 171.
[72] Nota, "Introducing Marimba Music as Part of the School Curriculum in Zimbabwe."

practice fit together like hand in glove, rather than just theorising about others' experiences.[73] That, to the researchers, is the essence of ethnographic research as an appropriate and useful approach for this research, the lived-in experience of participants being a point of focus.

Theme 2: Facilitation by Community Experts

Facilitation by community experts with a hands-on approach produced better results. During fieldwork, the community expert assisted the participants in the identification and preparation of the materials for the making of these instruments while also orally transmitting knowledge about the types of trees that would produce good acoustics from the staves. From the observations, students learnt how the different musical instruments are made by community experts. Authors theorise that this was because the knowledge was not simulated but shared from an original knowledge and experience base. Such knowledge is not always available in the academy but can only be available through collaboration and when co-produced with, and from, the community experts themselves. The strategies of teaching and learning that were applied during the lessons were dialogue, interaction, and knowledge sharing.

A by-product of facilitation by community experts was the peer learning approach, which enhanced the teaching and learning of IAM instruments. Participating students served as community experts as they also shared their prior knowledge with peers during lessons. For example, prior knowledge of some WSU participating students was useful as peers were learning from, with, and alongside other members. During the practice session, participants engaged in a dialogue with their peers.

> *"Apha ayikho na into ka soft kuba oko kudlalelwa phezulu?" (IsiXhosa = So this type of music, does not have soft, everyone plays at high volume?).* (Participant T)

> *"Xa kuxhentswa igubu likhala kakhulu one way, xa isehla isound, nomfutho kwaba baxhentsayo uyehla"* (IsiXhosa = when dancing, the drum sound should be audible all the time because when the drum sound is low, the dancer's energy decreases) [Participant A].

Dontsa argues that African music is basically practical, the performer does not learn the theory but, instead, he or she observes, listens to the other players and then imitates – he learns by experience acquired from active participation.[74] The emotional content of African music is dependent on the loudness and energy of the drummer.

This is a much more involved and deeper technique that is required in playing an African musical instrument, where the drum player must replicate the variety of emotions expressed by the dancers and the singers. In other words, African music is about the unity of sound by enhancing the emotions that are expressed vocally through dance and instruments. In addition, data confirms the connection between music and spirituality when Participant A stated that drum playing sometimes triggers convulsions because it is spiritual. Sifting through the data, the authors observed that there is a deeper and underlying philosophical knowledge, understanding, and approach to the construction of IAM instruments. Such scientific implications relate to the acquisition and application of cultural knowledge, technical prowess, construction and sound mechanisms. All of these accumulate and translate into the underlying philosophy in the making, playing, teaching and learning of African musical instruments.

Again, high levels of concentration re-surfaced as a typical characteristic of the demonstration lessons on the playing of IAM instruments. The demonstration lesson on the drumming technique reveals that the drummer should watch carefully so that he or she can give a strong beat at the appropriate moment**.** It transpired that psychological faculties are somewhat involved. In addition, lessons on the construction and playing technique of *umasengwane* revealed a step-by-step process. Participant G and one of the authors watched and actively engaged with the instructor as he demonstrated the making of *umasengwane.* The observations displayed more evidence that pointed towards positive results achieved with the demonstration method, and rote learning, rather than technology-based learning. This was evident when participants were guided by community experts on playing techniques of bow music instruments. In this regard, knowledge is orally transmitted by the experts, such as scraping the slippery top skin of a bowing

[73] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[74] Dontsa, "From the Museum to the Music Classroom: Teaching the Umrhubhe as an Ensemble Instrument."

stick known as *umcinga* in isiXhosa with broken glass when the mouth bow music instrument named *umrhubhe* in isiXhosa is not producing the desired sound.

Objective 2: The extent to which the pedagogical intervention measures assist in transplanting indigenous Nguni music instruments into the academy

Theme: Values embedded in IAM, and a conducive environment *displayed during the teaching and learning activities*

Another vital factor that this research suggested was the approach of teaching IAM instruments as an ensemble, the creation of a learning environment and values embedded in the teaching and learning of IAM. They also resonate quite significantly with the philosophical ideals of the theory of *Ubuntu* as articulated by Letseka and such principles resonate with, and support, the theoretical framework chosen for this research.[75] This is in line with Frempong and Kadam, as they state that the *Ubuntu* mindset and its related principles can help educational institutions to develop partnerships with the communities that can bring in diverse stakeholders and diverse knowledge within the ambit of learning.[76] In what follows, key features of the philosophy of *Ubuntu* were stated by participants in their responses about collective music making.

> *"We have a discussion time as we are in a group, that thing helps us a lot in improving communication and socialization with humans." (Participant F)*

> *Another participant highlighted the values that she gained.*
> *"Okokuqala mna ndiye ndafunda ukubaluleka komxhentso kuba bendingawu xabisanga kakhulu. Ndiye ndafunda ne discipline noku sebenzisana nabantu." (*Firstly, I learnt about the importance of umxhentso because I did not regard it as important. I learnt about discipline and working with others). [Participant H]

Instructors' attitudes such as patience, and tolerance during lessons caused learning to happen. Participants stated that:

> "*One instructor catered for slow learners and took time simplifying the technique.*" (Participant Z)

> *"Our instructor listens to us; they give us a chance to voice out our opinions about how to rehearse"* (Participant S)

The development of the IAM learning community and culture is a feature of IAM that was revealed as a necessary requirement for fostering a conducive learning environment for collective music-making. Such a typical environment was displayed at the WSU site, when the ensemble members, including participating students and the main researcher, were engaged in the bow music instruments workshop. During the lessons, as shown in video clip 03, participants had fun, socialized, laughed, and mocked those who were lagging, and wittingly encouraged them to work harder and better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors recommend teaching and learning approaches that look beyond the current Euro-centric teaching styles and incorporate the Masifundisane model that promotes engaged ways of teaching and learning Indigenous African Music at universities, by creating a space and a place for community music experts in the academy and their inclusion in the employment opportunities and policies of universities. Also, the authors propose field trips to build relations, and learn and engage the custodians about their history and culture in the villages where the music is practised.

CONCLUSION

[75] Letseka, "Anchoring Ubuntu Morality."
[76] George Frempong and Raavee Kadam, "Educational Paradigm with Ubuntu Mindset: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals in Education," in *Active Learning-Research and Practice for STEAM and Social Sciences Education* (IntechOpen, 2022).

This paper sought to discover pedagogical intervention measures for transplanting indigenous Nguni music instruments in the academy. The findings of this study revealed that during experiential learning, the participants displayed a lack of experience and expertise in constructing *uhadi*; therefore, the results indicated a need for guidance from community music experts. Emanating from the discussion illustrated above, pedagogical intervention measures such as the creation of a space and a place for community music experts, oral transmission, and the use of local resources could be effective for transmitting indigenous Nguni music instruments from the community to the academy.

Secondly, based on the data discussed the authors argue for a radical shift from an emphasis on a singular approach based on theoretical learning to a philosophy that emphasises reflective and reflexive learning (praxis and praxial approach to teaching and learning), active, and inclusive participation in music-making, developing aural perception skills, and an approach that incorporates co-production of knowledge with community experts. Lastly, the authors contend that the teaching and learning strategies, approaches and methods of teaching and learning IAM instruments, as discussed above, might develop awareness about, and respect for, the cultural dynamics, cultural values and knowledge in the making and constructing of African music instruments. The findings have gone some way in illustrating that more concentrated philosophical approaches and strategies of teaching and learning IAM instruments, such as oral transmission can be used for the transmission of IAM from communities to the university. Data unveiled indispensable knowledge about IAM and culture that was shared by community experts and some WSU participating members who are treated as whole people, bringing to the university the rich experiences held in their communities.

The key contribution of the article is the discussion provided for teaching and learning approaches that look beyond the current Euro-centric teaching styles to incorporate alternative and decolonized methods like Masifundisane-engaged ways for transplanting Indigenous African Music at universities and in this case, the Nguni music instruments

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