

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING STYLE (S) AND CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CHORAL MUSIC

The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify and codify pedagogical strategies used by expert African choral educators to develop students' understanding of stylistic characteristics of folk song-based and pop song-based African choral music including the ability to accurately perform those styles. We identified how expert African choral educators approached vocal, dance, and instrumental instruction for these contemporary African choral genres. Three choral educators, three percussionists and seven choreographers from Kenya participated in this study. The data types included interview transcripts, field notes, videos, and music scores. The results showed that expert teachers had varied methods of developing conceptual knowledge and performance skills but employed similar conceptual framework. They researched on musical cultures and exposed their students to sound structures before teaching the choral arrangements. Further, the educators combined classical singing techniques with cultural performance nuances to develop the styles. Common themes in this study included culturally responsive teaching, performance in relocated contexts, and change of philosophy in African music performance practices due to the changed contexts and western music education models. Change of context led to focus on audio and visual aesthetic qualities or structural qualities of the music instead of how these structural qualities facilitated the social events. Instrumental and dance instruction is based on adoption and modification of cultural music concepts to fit new music contexts. This study illuminates on meaningful music making, student centered teaching, mentoring, and responsive teaching, and competencies that choral pedagogues require to effectively teach African choral genres. This study showed that to develop sustainable and meaningful music education, there is need to redesign African educational models to corresponds with African educational and art production philosophies.

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