

The Challenges of Application of African Traditional Dance for Contemporary Educational Relevance

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Abstract

Students pursuing music degree courses in Kenyan public universities undergo dance instructions as part of their cognitive processes in learning traditional African music. The purpose of the dance courses is to enable students to practice, appreciate, preserve through performance and understand dance as a cultural identity in a modern educational context. Dances hitherto performed in specific cultural contexts are reconceptualised and situated into the classroom for instructional purposes thus raising fundamental questions regarding the effect/affect of reinterpretation processes that are inevitable. Through analytical and comparative procedures, this paper seeks to establish how various aspects, content, methodologies and performance practice of traditional African dances commonly taught at Kenyatta university are unearthed, interpreted, re-evaluated and integrated into new academic thinking yet remaining valuable and important source of cultural identity.

Keywords: African Traditional Dance, Music, Cultural Identity

Introduction

The Department of Music and Dance in Kenyatta University is one of the oldest music institutions in East and Central Africa if not in the sub-Saharan Africa. The institution was established in 1970s as one of the Departments of the then Kenyatta University College (Omondi, 1984). Since then, the Department has metamorphosed into various music establishments, at one point becoming the School of Music with three distinct departments namely; Department of African Music and Dance, Department of Music History and Composition and Department of Music Education and Performance. After a couple of years, the School was changed into a Music Institute constituting the three Departments. The three Departments were later collapsed into the current Department of Music and Dance. All these transformations have been viewed as an attempt by the university policy makers to respond to the changing market and societal needs as far as music training and development of human capacity in Kenya's music industry is concerned.

Training at the Department is designed to reflect its vision, mission and objectives as outlined in Kenyatta University's 5-year strategic plan. The vision of the Department is to become a centre of excellence that offers appropriate training in music, dance, music technology, musical arts and music education by fostering creativity, performance, dance, ensemble and good practice. The Department is on a mission to constantly seek and achieve the highest standards of academic excellence in musical knowledge,

performance, dance, music technology, teaching, learning and research by preparing students to realise their potential and make positive contributions to society.

Students admitted for various programmes in the Department are presented with a variety of courses that range from the ones that are theory based to those that are practical oriented. Training in vocal pedagogy, instrumental tuition and dance instruction are mainly practical based. It is the component of the dance instruction that this study endeavours to address. Through analytical and comparative procedures, this paper seeks to establish how various aspects, content, methodologies and performance practice of traditional African dances commonly taught at Kenyatta university, in the Department of Music and Dance are unearthed, interpreted, re-evaluated and integrated into new academic thinking yet remaining valuable and important source of cultural identity.

Discourses in African Dance Instruction and Re-Contextualisation

Lately, there has been increased attention to African traditional music in African academy. Spirited and concerted efforts have been witnessed in conferences, seminars, symposiums and workshops where musicologists and ethnomusicologist alike have endeavoured and vigorously pursued the need to re-think and refocus the place of African music in national programmes and schools' curricula in Africa. Forums where scholarly arguments and positions have been discussed and contested include the Pan African Society of Musical Arts Education (PASMAE), International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) and locally the Kenya Association of Musical Arts Education (KAMAE). In 2005, a symposium was held at Kenyatta University with participants drawn from East African region and the theme of the symposium was refocusing indigenous music in Music education'. Similar symposiums and conferences have been witnessed in other parts of the continent and efforts have been sought to expand the scope of African music in the curricula besides emphasizing the need to adapt African traditional music for use in the new context.

Besides a plethora of published and unpublished monographs that have accrued out of these forums, two divergent schools of thought have emerged. On one hand, there is a school of musical purists that holds the view that teaching of African music in schools should be modelled along an ethnic approach. For instance, James Flolu (2005) argues that village musicians are the best teachers of African music and that the traditional context is the best environment for a student of African music. The study (ibid.) further argues that:

Every kind of music is a social fact, a social reality. It is individuals or groups of people who live within a society who make music... Every kind of music, therefore a cultural possession of a particular society. It can thus be argued that any particular music can only be understood in terms of the criteria the group or society that makes and appreciates it (p. 108).

Another musical purist that concurs with Flolu's viewpoint is Katuli (2005). Although advocating for a culturally integrated, all-encompassing, inclusive music curricula, the scholar argues that for traditional music to be effective as a means of enculturation of the youth, it might be necessary to simulate the real situation in which it is performed.

Nzewi (2001) from a pedagogical angle adds his voice to the chorus of the musical purists by arguing that:

The folklore model of child education remains multi-dimensionally viable as an effective pedagogical strategy for cultural arts education in Africa. This position implicates the argument that a holistic approach for musical arts education, deriving from the African legacy of musical arts thinking and practice is a necessary foundation for any child who may not eventually opt for atomized disciplinary specialization in further education or professional practice. Finally its argued that making the indigenous African pedagogic principles as well as theoretical frameworks the bedrock of modern music education will enhance the human-cultural identity as well as creative originality of the modern educated African in the modern world context (p. 19).

In as much as Nzewi's position and that of other musical purists may want to be validated, Agak (2001) presents a worrisome picture as far as the issues accessibility and availability of the village resource persons. Agak (*ibid.*) argues that:

Society, on the other hand, is faced with the problem of losing through death, the old generation who are the custodians of indigenous music. Yet indigenous music has a great potential as one of the agents in preserving and promoting culture and is a good medium of for affecting social and cultural changes because of the ability to communicate all sorts of messages in pleasing tones (p. 39).

The scholar further laments that the problem of ethnic approach is compounded by the fact that most of the present generation of young people spend most of their time in schools and hence cannot be subjected to learning music from an ethnic approach where they would be required to learn traditional music from a rural setting. This standpoint is further buttressed by Shitandi (2005) who observes that:

... due to modern civilization and other agencies of social change, folk musics in Kenya are diffusing more and more into one another to form large heterogeneous blocks. Traditional music is now performed out of its original context and for different functions and uses. Resources in indigenous music and its technology have continued to diminish day by day. Modern music institutions of professionals and semi-professionals have emerged. Demands for music and the taste of the consumer has changed considerably (p. 284).

It is perhaps out of a rather gloom picture of the present state of African music painted in Agak's (*ibid.*) and Shitandi (*ibid.*) studies that on the other end of the continuum a school of music liberalists has emerged. This school of thought maintains that learning African traditional music in re-located context through re-contextualisation processes is a welcome and an inevitable undertaking. For instance, Digolo (2005, p. 62) notes that it is apparent that indigenous Kenyan music systems, like those of other African countries, function within an enigmatic cultural environment. The roles of this music should therefore be interpreted in the context of such a situation. In reiterating this assertion, Omondi (1984) records that:

Forces of social change and acculturation have seriously encroached into the traditional setting by interfering with traditional institutions so that [traditional

music performances] occurs only in pockets of remote, isolated rural areas. The forms of traditional music performed are consequently reduced; only a few special ones connected with rituals and occasionally festivals remain (p. 43).

Omondi's observation (ibid.) does seem to provide the musical thesis for liberalists and cultural conservationists that hold the view that given the scenario as presented in the above observations, there is need to preserve and conserve African musical heritage through re-contextualisation mechanisms. In this regard, traditional music as an expression of culture is not static. A process thus grows in performance and re-performance that allows creative responses to adaptations of traditional music for use in new contexts while embracing the spirit of stability, continuity and change. This position has also been contested because of the ambivalence that seems to be embedded in the re-contextualisation process itself. Proponents of re-contextualisation argue that learning or performing African music in relocated contexts have in many instances led to distortion and misrepresentation of the performance practice in which traditional usage and contextual implications are compromised.

The divergent viewpoints (purist and liberalist view) notwithstanding, the African students in our institutions of higher learning have to, nonetheless, learn and practice music in the modern global contexts. The question, however, remains that in such a dynamic formal academic setting can the student and the teachers or master musicians; reconceptualise, interpret, re-evaluate and appreciate various aspects of the traditional African music while still remaining true to its cultural identity, stability and continuity? This study will endeavour to address this dilemma through comparative and analytical procedures of *Ohangla* dance music taught to and performed by music students in the Department of Music and Dance at Kenyatta University.

The Traditional *Ohangla* Dance Music of the Luo of Nyanza in Kenya

Scholars such as Caleb Okumu, Charles Nyakiti, Emily Akuno, Helen Agak, Philip Akumu, Rose Ongati and Washington Omondi have written extensively on Luo Music Culture. A number of these scholars have ably discussed drum and Dance music of the Luo community in Kenya with more interest in the *ohangla* dance music. One would arguably say that *ohangla* has attracted most scholarly attention because of its popularity not only in rural musical setting but also due to its dynamism in negotiating for space and place in urban music soundscape. The dynamism of *ohangla* dance music in accommodating new concepts and creativity has presented music scholars in Kenya with a confusing scenario in which on one hand there are those who argue for *ohangla* as a traditional Luo music genre and on the other those who perceive the genre as a contemporary Luo musical expression. For instance, Akumu (2004) discusses the origin, development and use of *ohangla* and concludes that the present *ohangla* music is a contemporary Luo music genre whose traditional forerunner was a Luo drum music called *Kalapapla*.

Due to the raging debate about the origin, form, content and performance practice of *ohangla*, the authors interviewed cultural groups in Nairobi that are known for their riveting *ohangla* dance music and, which the groups claim to be the original *ohangla* dance music. In this regard, three groups were identified namely: *Kamaliza* dance troupe,

Kenge Kenge and *Waza Africa*. Interviews carried out revealed that all the teams concurred that: *ohangla* dance music;

1. Is a traditional Luo music genre?
2. Comprises instrumentalists who are predominantly male players with occasionally mixed male and female vocalists
3. Constitutes an instrumental ensemble of six to eight drums called *bunde* (singular *bul*) and which are of varied sizes, *ajawa* (gourd shaker) or *pekee* (bottle tops, hand shakers), a metal ring, a wooden sound box called *sanduk*, *Tung'* (animal horn) and a long cylindrical drum called *kalapapla*; and in some instances a Luo fiddle called *orutu* or lyre called *thum* or *Nyatiti* is incorporated.

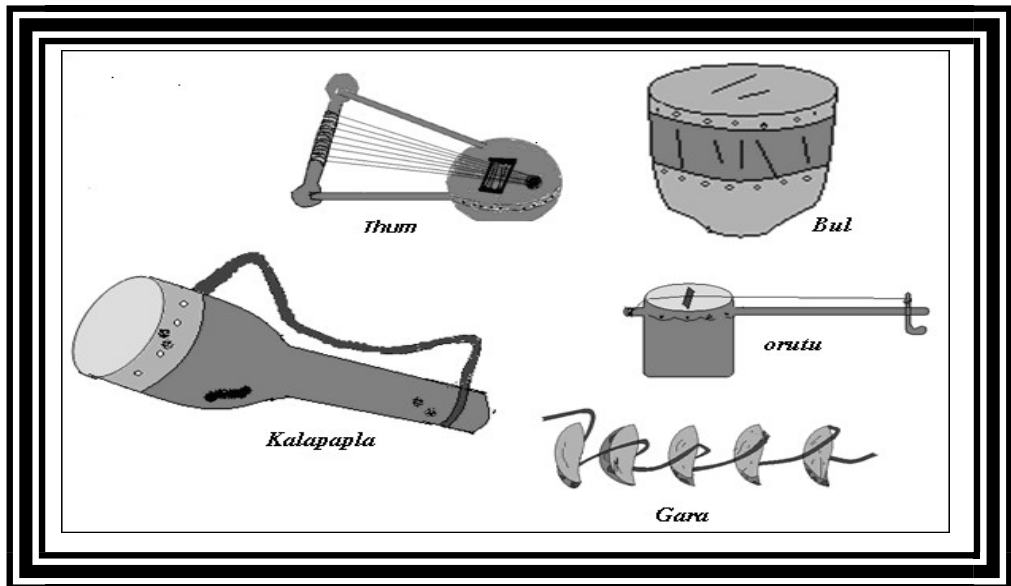


Fig. 1: Assortment of Luo Traditional Instruments used in Ohangla Dance Music

4. Incorporates dance element in which case it is a collective participation although occasionally the dance aspect is presented as premeditated highly choreographed dance patterns
5. Is associated with the Luo post-funeral rituals that provided general entertainment to the attendees
6. Involves body movements that include shaking shoulders, forward and backward arm movements and hip movements executed in quick succession. All the movements are dictated by the articulation of the drum beats and the overall rhythmic patterns executed on the six to eight drum set and rhythmic patterns
7. The singing comprises a litany of short cyclic songs with textual ideas ranging from love, praise, to general social commentary
8. Exhibit cross rhythms that are rendered in a fairly fast and spirited tempo

Solo

A-we-ro wang' yo a-we-ro wang'

Resp.

O wang' nyar ma-nya-la

Solo

A-we-ro wang' yo a-we-ro wang'

Resp.

o wang' nyar ma-nya-la

Fig. 2: An Excerpt of a Song to Illustrate Rhythmic Structure that Constitutes *Ohangla* Dance Rendition

9. Employs indigenous costumes: mostly the *owalo* (sisal skirts) used mostly by female dancers and shoulder and waist wrappers used by male participants. The lead singer, dancer or instrumentalists may in certain instances hold a fly whisk.

There was a consensus from the respondents that due to the dynamic character of *ohangla* dance music and thus, its ability to grow into performance and re-performance, the music exists in a variety of formats in the Kenyan urban contemporary musical space. The interviewed groups confirmed that in the urban popular musical arena the *ohangla* dance music has:

1. Incorporated into its traditional instrumental ensemble modern musical instruments that include; keyboard, *onanda* (the chromatic mouth organ) or occasionally the accordion, the West Africa *djembe* and or conga drums and in some instances an electric bass guitar.
2. Incorporated contemporary dance and neo-traditional music idioms with dancers executing highly choreographed and properly rehearsed dance movements that are a fusion of both traditional and contemporary dance expressions.
3. Dance movements that put emphasis on pelvic movements with exaggerated gyration of hip movements
4. Rhythmic structures that are a blend of the traditional *ohangla* rendition, *benga* and contemporary popular Luo dance hall music.
5. Dancers who organise themselves in pairs of two (a male and a female dancer) adorned in modern costumes – in most cases these are ordinary clothes designed to exaggerate and magnify certain body movements
6. Song renditions that are harmonised in thirds with songs texts that embody messages with love themes, politics, topical issues such as HIV/AIDS and social commentary mostly for general entertainment and not tied to cultural rituals

A section of the Luo community mostly the older generation is opposed to these modern trends in the *ohangla* dance music renditions because of what they see as distortion of the dance's cultural identity. Digolo (2005) succinctly captures this opposing view when she writes:

The problem of identity is more pronounced among the older Kenyan generation. Certain diehard traditionalists are not receptive to the foreign concepts, elements and trends that are constantly being associated with the indigenous music genres, particularly the genres that serve in cultural rituals [such as *ohangla*]....*ohangla* ensemble which traditionally consists of a set of six to seven drums, accompanied with a wooden box to provide percussive effects has currently incorporated into its performance a number of neo-traditional music idioms. These include use of modern instruments such as guitar, keyboard and mouth organ, popular tunes and harmonisation of voice parts. The new developments have modified the *ohangla* music into sort of popular band and have subsequently ended its ritualistic function (p. 61).

It is against the backdrop of Digolo's (ibid.) sentiments that this study finds it imperative to interrogate how *ohangla* dance music is reconceptualised and re-interpreted when it is relocated into classroom situations and subjected to cognitive processes. How do the players in the African academy discover, interpret, re-evaluate and re-construct aspects of content, methodologies and performance practice of *ohangla* as a dynamic phenomenon vis a vis its role as factor of cultural identity?

The Role of *Ohangla* Dance in the Process of Learning Indigenous Music

Kenya has slightly more than 42 ethnic communities. This demographic reality has presented policy makers and stakeholders in education sector with a challenge of exploring ways and means of offering curricula that are responsive to the musical needs of a learner in such a multi-cultural setting. To surmount such challenges, the Department of music and dance, at Kenyatta University, strives to offer a variety of dances drawn from mainly the larger communities but which are a representative of the eight large culture zones (areas) namely; coastal region, central and eastern region, Western region (which includes Nyanza regions) and the urban Nairobi area. *Ohangla* is one of the dances that are taught at the University in the Department of music and dance. This dance is selected for discussions in this study because of its popularity across a number of communities in Kenya. In the same vein, it is one of the dance renditions that are well impressively executed every semester.

Thus, in every semester students undertaking Diploma and undergraduate music programmes in the Department of Music and Dance at Kenyatta are required to learn how to perform a traditional dance for female or male and mixed participants identified for them by dance instructors. Therefore, for a full education circle one is expected to have learnt two dances each semester which translates to at least twenty different traditional African dances. Table 1 presents information on the dance repertoire available in the Department.

Table 1***Dance Repertoire Available in the Department***

LEVEL		FIRST SEMESTER DANCE INSTRUCTION	SECOND SEMESTER DANCE INSTRUCTION
Certificate/ Diploma	Mixed	Kisii Dance	Kinze Dance of the Kamba
	Female	Ndumo of the Agikuyu	Kuria Dance from Nyanza region
	Male	Borana Dance from the Coast	Somali/Gabra/Orma from North Eadtern
1 st Year	Mixed	Sengenya of the Mijikenda	Isukuti of the Luhya from Western Kenya
	Female	Chakacha	Kifudu
	Male	Msego Dance of the Pokomo	Maasai Dance from South Rift
2 nd Year	Mixed	Ohangla Dance of the Luo	Teso Dance from Western
	Female	Nyatiti of the Luo	Samburu Dance from North Rift
	Male	Nandi Dance from South Rift	Kilumi Dance of the Kamba
3 rd Year	Mixed	Gonda of the Mijikenda	Mwomboko Dance of the Agikiuyu
	Female	Dodo of the Luo	Kingika
	Male	Ramogi of the Luo	Kirumbizi from the Mijikenda
4 th Year	Mixed	Pokomo Dance	Mukanda of the Kamba
	Male	Pokot Dance from the North Rift	Kisii Dance from Nyanza Region
	Male	Kivaata of Kamba	Samburu Dance from North Rift

At this juncture the succeeding discussion will focus on how the above dances are more conceptualised, interpreted, re-evaluated and re-constructed in classroom situations at Kenyatta University, through the example of *ohangla* dance music. For learning to be meaningful it has to be a progressive, logical, systematic and objective. Therefore, in classroom situations, the instructional processes for the *ohangla* dance music are undertaken based on the following broad areas:

Content of the Dance

Students are taught both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretical aspects will for instance entail cultural and historical background of *ohangla* dance music. Taboos, rites, superstitions and complex constitutional matters associated with the community from which the dance is derived, cultural and ritualistic functions of the dance, instruments and songs that accompany the dance, translation of the textual material and the corresponding meaning and finally modern creative and innovative elements that have been incorporated in the dance are discussed. The practical aspect takes care of learning dance steps, dance movements and patterns or formations, learning the songs, coordination and synchronizing the dance movements as dictated by rhythmic beats executed on the instruments and partly by the singing. It also involves learning how to smoothly execute entries, transitions and exits. Form and structural components of the dance are elements that are also captured under mastery of content.

Methodological Issues

Both modern lecture-group discussion and aural-oral transmission methods are used in the instructional process of *ohangla* dance music. The former method is considered appropriate when dealing with the theoretical aspects of the dance. Learners are taken through cultural background of the dance, occasions and cultural practices or rituals associated with the dance. In addition, creative and innovative elements that have been incorporated in the dance renditions are explained. Teaching aids such as video recordings of the dance in its primary contexts and written literature are utilised. Resource persons that are endowed with fair amount with the cultural knowledge and understanding of the dance are occasionally utilised. This method is supplemented with the indigenous method in handling the practical aspects. The aural-oral transmission methods based on the mnemonic-movement-music, the 3M technique (Kwami, 1998), observation, listening, echoing and imitation (musical memory methods) are employed in dealing with the practical aspects of the dance. Dance steps, dance patterns, textual themes, cues, transitions, coordinating and synchronising body and arm movements, time, rhythm and territorial issues are learned progressively beginning with basic units to more complex and subtle elements of the dance. In this regard, musical memory method is extensively utilised. Various aspects of the dance are rehearsed through repeatedly until many of the elements are internalised and committed to memory.

Expressive and Aesthetic Aspects and Cultural Identity Issues

The details of expressive and aesthetic dimensions of the dance that are informed by appropriate ethnic colours as evidenced by the body painting and deco and specific idiomatic styles associated with the cultural systems from which the dance is derived are considered here. For instance, suitable instruments and appropriate song repertoire, ululations, shouts of praise and excitement identifiable with specific cultural expression are emphasized. Unified execution of the dance movements evident in the synchronized arm movements with exactness of coordination of dance steps and clear dance formations contribute to overall interpretation of this particular dimension. This effort is complemented with the general elegance, beauty and insertion of sequences of charm reinforced by other visual experiences of other body gestures.



Plate 1: One of the authors (Dr. Wilson Shitandi) Illustrating Rhythmic Execution on a Set of Six *Ohangla* Drums

Kinaesthetic Energy

This is defined by the level of involvement by each participant. Dance performances in African traditional setting are in many facets a communal and collective engagement. Students undertaking *ohangla* dance instruction are encouraged to work towards attaining the same level of involvement to create a sense of unity and belonging. The momentum and appropriate tempo of the dance is sustained when all the dancers seem to exhibit almost the same amount of kinaesthetic energy. This is also reinforced by the vocal vitality and projection. In the case of *ohangla* dance music, the fairly fast spirited tempo is demanded of the participants. Feeling the beat or pulse of the music through mental appreciation becomes a primary goal for the learner.

Organisational Aspects and Performance Practice

Dances are organised in traditional African contexts based on various socio-cultural determinants. These may include occasions or cultural rituals associated with the dance, age set, sex, time and season and medium through which the dance is rendered. Issues of arrangement of instrumentalists, dancers and their suitability; the distinct roles of lead dancers, instrumentalists and singers, rest of the other singers, instrumentalists and dancers come into play under this section. Performances are mounted and practised in the open air or occasionally in an enclosure in form of a classroom. Dancers perform the dance in pairs with instrumentalists and vocalists standing at a vantage position. During assessment, the dance is rendered twice or thrice depending on the discretion of the examiners.

Issues of Overall Rendition and Preparedness

This component of the dance instruction caters for the overall delivery of the learnt dance. Issues of style and conformity to idiomatic expressions uniquely identifiable with the dance in question are pursued. Level of preparedness in terms of how well rehearsed the dance presented to the panel of assessors is, are sought for. The dancer is therefore expected to be in perfect harmony with himself, his or her fellow singer and the rhythmic sounds played by the instrumentalists. A general rating in terms of poor, weak, strong, average, above average, good, very good and impressive are assigned to each participant.

Evaluation Aspects

Evaluation of dance instruction at Kenyatta University is based on a predetermined criterion that is agreed upon by the dance instructors and specific lecturers assigned to oversee the learning process of the dance in question. The criterion is objectively designed with the aforementioned aspects of the dance instruction in mind. First and foremost, after several sessions, the instructor (usually a specialist in the training of the dance) agrees with the lecturer assigned to oversee the activities of the dance instruction to subject the students to preliminary assessment. This is usually referred to as continuous assessment test (CAT) which caters for 40% of the final aggregate mark. Each student is keenly observed as the performance unfolds and based on what is observed from each student, general comments are made and depending on how positive or negatively the comments are, the participant is assigned a mark. The same procedure

goes for the final practical exam but in this case each student is allocated 60%. Out of what the student scores in the CAT and the final practical exams, a student is awarded an aggregate mark and the final grade which could be A (for distinction), B, C, D, E or a simple fail. See the table below with information on scores of a few selected students.

Table 2

A Sample of Scores of Students that Participated in an Ohangla Dance Instruction

S/No	Name	Reg. No.	UNIT CODE	CAT	CAT	Av(C)	E1+E2	Av.E	G.Total
				1 40/40 (M/F)	2 40/40 Mixed	X/2	X+X/2	60/60	Av(C) + Av(E)
1.	John	M25/00XX/11	MPE108	24	22	33	46+43	45	78
2.	Kennedy	M25s/00YY/10	MPE108	23	22	23	40+49	45	68
3.	Gabriel	M07/00WW/11	MPE108	22	23	23	40+40	40	63
4.	Barassa	M25/00ZZ/10	MPE108	25	24	25	51+47	56	81
5.	Brian	M25s/OOAA/11	MPE108	21	24	23	43+37	40	63
6.	Johnson	M25s/OOBB/11	MPE108	27	26	27	55+51	53	80

Key:

- CAT 1 - Continuous Assessment Test 1 Assessed out of 40%
 CAT 2 - Continuous Assessment Test 2 Assessed out of 40%
 Av(C) X/2 - Average Score of the CAT 1 and CAT 2 (x= Marks Scored/2)
 E1 - Scores for the First Exam in Instrumental Practicals
 E2 - Scores for the Second Exam in Dance Practicals
 E1 + E2 - Sum Total of Scores for Exam 1 and Exam 2
 Av.E - Average Score of E1 and E2 (x=Marks Scored/2)
 G.Total. Av(c) + Av (E) - Grand Total = Average scores of the CATS and Exams

Please note that the list presented here is not complete. The information is basically an extract from a list of about twenty-eight students. A score of 80% means that the student had an impressive mastery of the content of *ohangla* dance music, that his level of involvement was commendable, that the candidate understood and appreciated the expressive and cultural aesthetics of the dance – that is use of appropriate costumes besides capturing specific idiomatic styles that are depictive of the cultural expressions of the community from which the dance is derived. A student of such rating is believed to have grasped the theoretical and practical aspects of *ohangla* dance understandably well. Given an opportunity such a student should be able reproduce the general outline of *ohangla* traditional dance music in a training session.

Conclusion

When African traditional dance music is re-contextualised into a classroom setting, it is conceptualised as a cultural product, a work of art and a cognitive product. The dance is conceptualised as a cultural product because of the effort to conform to its cultural fundamentals. Despite being divorced from its cultural associations or rituals, issues of appropriate instruments, costumes, dance styles, rhythmic patterns, thematically acceptable songs and general performance practice as witnessed in its primary contexts are propagated and continued. The conceptualisation of African traditional dance as a

cultural product however is not guided by a fixed mind-set. Students are allowed to demonstrate their own understanding of the dance through a re-interpretation and re-creation process. This process may require addition of traditional musical instruments from the same community in an effort to enrich the overall texture or omission of a song that is not thematically coherent. As a work of art, learners are encouraged to realise a fair amount of expressive and aesthetic sensibility. Issues of form, discernable structure, clarity of dance patterns, articulation of dance steps and well-rehearsed high-quality performance are demanded of the learners. In conceptualising African traditional dance as a cognitive product, learners are evaluated to ascertain whether or not learning has taken place. Issues of learners' mastery of content with regard to its theoretical and practical aspects are dealt with.

Re-conceptualisation of African traditional dance instructions in classroom situations will require a holistic and a culturally responsive approach. For instance, it is undeniably true that methods such as enculturation and socialization used in teaching traditional dance music are tedious and time-consuming. Equally worth noting is the fact that learning traditional African dances through modern literacy processes will no doubt produce a dancer with no creative spontaneity and practical musicianship. The way forward is to conceptualise African dance rendition in a classroom setting as a work of art, a cultural and cognitive product whose content, methodology and performance practice should be re-interpreted, re-evaluated and re-constructed in academic thinking from a culturally responsive perspective.

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