



## Teaching and Learning of Music and Its Implementation at the Primary School Level

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to examine the teaching and learning of music, its implementation and the proper curriculum contents involved at the primary schools level. Teachers in most of the primary schools in Oyo township are required to teach music as part of the overall curriculum. Music is one of the subjects that form parts of cultural and creative arts in which many teachers display a low level of confidence and competence to teach. Added to this, problems such as lack of resources priority, time, knowledge and experience appear to inhibit the regular teaching of the subject by generalist classroom teacher. It is recommended that music should be separated from the cultural and creative arts and music graduates should be the one in charge of teaching it at the primary schools level.*

**Keywords:** Teaching, Learning, Music, Primary school, Implementation

### Introduction

Historically, music as a subject of study in Nigeria has existed since 1842, marked by the introduction of mission schools that created an atmosphere for teaching and practice of European music in Nigeria (Adebiyi, 2014). The current form of music education, however takes off from the Nigerian National Policy on Education in 1987, which states that “the Federal Government, realizing the importance of arts and culture in the development of science and technology, has given Arts and Cultural education their legitimate right in the nation's educational system from the primary, post-primary and post-secondary institutions with their educational goals clearly stipulated.

There is much research that indicates participation in the arts (music) has been shown to enhance academic achievement, develop children's respect for themselves and others, and develop children's life skills for the future as well as allowing them to express themselves in a variety of authentic media (Catterall, Chaplcau & Iwanaga, 1999; Fiske, 1999; Bamford, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2012).

Engagement in the arts can also increase the attendance and attitudes to attendance of children at school (Dreezen, Aprial & Deasy, 1999; Uptis & Smithrim, 2003), children's performance in reading, verbal and general literacy skills (Butzlaff, 2001; Hettland & Winner, 2001; Hunter,



2005; Bamford, 2006; Vaughan, Harris & Caldell, 2011) as well as their mathematical achievement (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanga, 1999; Hetland & Winner, 2001; Bamford, 2006). Arts education research over the years has highlighted the situation of non-specialist primary arts teachers as having little confidence in their own artistic ability and their ability to teach the arts to children (Russell-Bowie, 2012).

This research work will be based on the teaching of music in the Nigerian primary schools especially Oyo State. In many countries generalist primary school teachers are now expected not only to teach English, Science and many other across curriculum perspectives, but also to have basic knowledge, skills and confidence to teach music,, visual arts, dance and drama. This is despite the fact that many of them have not been adequately trained in any or some of these arts subjects further as a result, many primary schools across a variety of countries have less programmes. Some of the problems identified include; teachers perception of low confidence and competence, lack of resources, time and priority to implement an effective music programme resulting in the marginalization of music education and programmes in schools. In the case of Nigeria, in primary schools teaching of music is limited to nursery rhymes and singing with only a few private schools teaching the playing of musical instruments (Adebisi, 2014).

### **Suggested Curriculum for Music in Primary Schools**

Various scholars have designed curriculum to be followed at the primary level of education for music. Roese (2003) recommends that all teaching of music in schools should be considered under two headings: “Class teaching” and “individual teaching”.

The former should include:

- The signing of good songs in unison and in parts
- Breathing exercises
- Voice production
- Sight signing
- Ear training
- Listening to good music

The latter should include:

- The teaching of instruments or solo singing
- Theory

The above design can be a guide to the curriculum developer but not necessarily follow it to the lettered. According to Singapore Ministry of Education, Student Development Curriculum Division (2016), the syllabus spans across four key stages from primary one to secondary school two. Each stage comprises two levels. The expected knowledge and skills that students should acquire over the two years of each stage are detailed in the learning outcomes. Each stage builds upon the competencies from the previous stage(s).

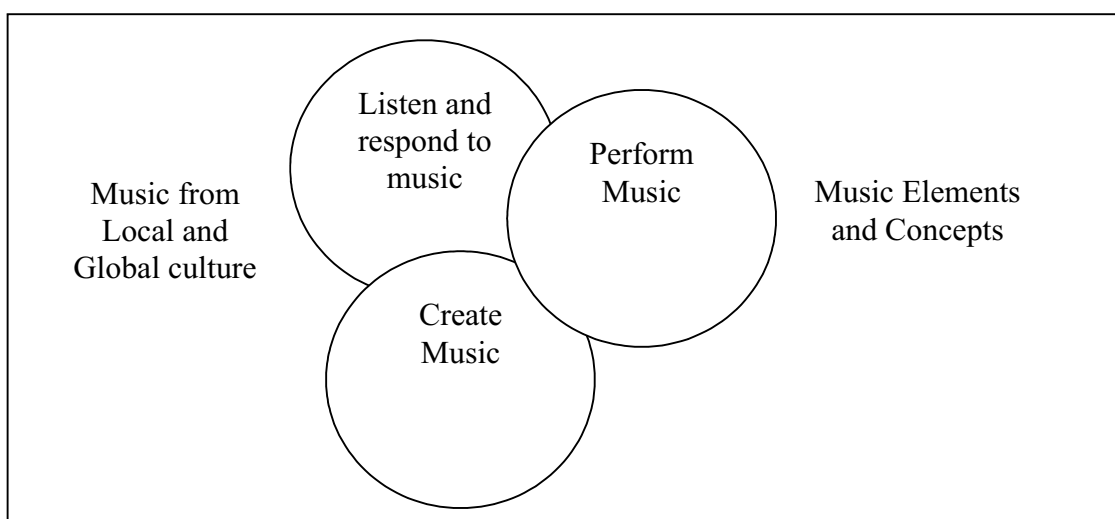
**Table 1:** Stages of the Primary and Lower Secondary Music Syllabus

STAGE	LEVEL			
4				Sec 1 – 2
3			PRY 5 – 6	
2		PRY 3 – 4		
1	PRY 1 – 2			

Moreover, the learning outcomes are organized around five overwhelming learning objectives (Los). All learning outcomes should be addressed and learned in an integrated manner, where elements and concepts are learned through active musical experiences, such as music creation and performance as well as movement in

music; and where the display of musical skills (listening, creating, performing), draw on students' learning and understanding of musical elements and concepts.

The following diagram summarizes the approach in which the five Los can be achieved.

**Figure 1:**

Framework for teaching and learning in the primary and lower secondary Music Syllabus

### Suggested Syllabus for Nigerian Primary School

The nature and peculiarities of Nigerian pupils need to be taken into consideration before a syllabus can be designed. Pupils' cultural background has to be taken into cognizance when

designing the curriculum. Teaching primary school pupils western ideas need to be reduced or totally eradicated in Nigeria.

### Primary One

- Introduction to Theory of Music
- Individual singing – Rhymes & Poems
- Group singing – Short Choruses



### Primary Two

- Theory of Music II
- Individual Singing – More advanced rhymes & poems
- Group singing – Short African Pieces

### Primary Three

- Theory of Music III
- Introduction of instrument – Recorder
- Group singing – More African Pieces

### Primary Four

- Theory of Music IV
- Recorder Playing – Poems & Rhymes
- Popular Musicians

### Primary Five

- Theory of Music V
- Recorder Playing – e.g. National Anthem
- More popular Musicians

### Primary Six

- Theory of Music VI
- Recorder Playing – More Pieces given
- Art Musicians

The above syllabus is not limited to this, it can still be expanded.

### Suggested Pedagogies for Teaching

A well planned and designed curriculum needs appropriate pedagogies and teaching approaches which are keys to providing a meaningful learning experience for students. Teachers are encouraged to plan lessons that engage the students

through a variety of musical experiences.

Student Development Curriculum Division (2016) explains some of these; an effective approach to engage the students includes involving them in decision-making during the process of performing, creating and listening to music. Through techniques like effective questioning, teachers can encourage students to express their thoughts and ideas and yet provide sufficient scaffold for them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Teachers are encouraged to weave in opportunities for collaborating learning and to also consider the musical background of the students when designing lessons and selecting music materials.

A music lesson refers to one where the instructional experience revolves around the music itself. The teacher should involve the students orally and kinesthetically in the music. Principles of music specific pedagogies such as Kodaly, Dalcroze and Orff should be harnessed in the teaching of music. These are three distinct approaches which could be adapted and delivered in the primary and secondary classrooms.

Teacher needs to assess his or her work during the course of delivering lesson to the pupils in a classroom situation. SDCD, (2016) explains assessment as the integral to the teaching and learning process. Assessment should be carried out regularly to provide students with information about their



strengths and to help them bridge learning gaps. The information also allows teachers to review their teaching approaches and strategies. Music assessments could be carried out through a variety of ways to facilitate students learning. These include listening activities (Which could include responding through movement), music performances, improvisation or composition tasks, written assignments or reflection journals.

### Conclusion

The context of this paper is simply a music curriculum which is active and be embraced by all. There is an emphasis on the variety of approaches which teachers of different backgrounds and experience may use to involve pupils in music-making. No single framework for primary music could suit all schools or teachers. It depends on the participating pupils and teachers, the school authorities, local, state and national government policies etc. Music is an integral part of young children's intellectual, cultural emotional and spiritual development and should not be treated in isolation from the rest of the curriculum. To include music across that curriculum will provide pupils with experiences that will broaden their thinking and facilitate a deeper understanding of the world in which they live.

### Recommendations

- Regular and well organized training and re-training programmes should be conducted and well supervised by the Ministry of Education/or State

Universal Basic Education Board to update the knowledge of teachers to enable them to engage their pupils meaningfully.

Music should be separated from the cultural and creative arts and make it an examinable subject like the other subjects.

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