Teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in the School of Music, North-West University

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Dear Mr Nzelu

Language editing

I confirm that I edited your dissertation, *Teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in the School of Music, North-West University*, and that I indicated the necessary grammatical corrections and stylistic improvements. Please contact me if there are any queries or if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

AMANDA KRUGER

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Abstract

This study of teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in the School of Music at North-West University took the form of an instrumental case study. Data was gathered by means of personal interviews with ten students and five staff members in the school's diploma and BA programmes.

Two themes emerged, namely processes of musical transmission, and matters related to performance skill, repertoire and aesthetics. The interpretation of these themes was informed by the theory of community of practice.

The first theme involves aural and literary musical transmission, with its categories tonic sol-fa and staff notation, rote learning, mass media and community music learning. Aurality is the basis of community musical performance, and aural transmission is also general practice in the School of Music. This is evident in the high incidence of spontaneous rote learning. The mass media furthermore emerged as a common mode of aural transmission. The integration of sol-fa and staff notation is another domain of transmission. This is evident in individual and peer learning strategies, as well as the teaching methods of staff.

The second theme involves performance technique, repertoire and aesthetics. Student participants were found to possess prior skills and knowledge, while articulating emerging awareness of scientific approaches, especially in relation to vocal sound production and health. Data on vocal aesthetics in turn involves vibrato and tone colour, which relate to notions of social identity.

This study points to the need to expand the interdependence of aural and literate modes of transmission, the integration of staff and sol-fa notation, collaborative learning, the use of mass media platforms and the relationship between differing musical aesthetics.

Keywords

Musical aesthetics, music repertoire, music teaching-learning practices, musical community of practice**,** musical transmission, North-West University School of Music.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the motivation for this study as well as its objectives and method of investigation.

While prior knowledge and experience is a self-evident requirement in any area of tertiary study, the teaching-learning experiences of music students also involves the dynamics of music as a fundamental domain of enculturation. Put differently, music is a primary modelling system in certain communities – a basic form of human expression and social networking ingrained during childhood and unfolding adaptively over entire life-spans (Blacking, in Byron,1995:223; Feld, 1982).

A pilot study involving purposive sampling conducted by me at the beginning of 2017 among students enrolled for the Diploma in Music and BA (Music and Society) programmes in the School of Music at North-West University, correspondingly revealed extensive musical experiences linked to home, church, school and other local institutions, as well as the mass media. I therefore argue here that teaching-learning in the School of Music cannot be conceptualised effectively in terms of conventional institutional practices alone. Data accumulated during the pilot study suggested that students' engagement with teaching-learning practices in the School of Music are inseparable from extracurricular experiences (Blackmore, 2010; Brashier, 2016; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Edinyang, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger-Trayner, 2015). This alerts attention to the pitfalls of interpreting musical experiences, epistemologies and teaching-learning strategies in terms of conventional opposites such as community/university, folk wisdom/science, untrained/trained, amateur/professional, informal/formal, ethnic music/art music, and oral/literate. In contrast, Lave and Wenger (1991:50) locate meaningful teaching-learning in continually shifting social relations that involve a diversity of settings, participants and practices. In fact, all social systems "change and evolve as demanded by their relationship with an external environment" (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014:262).

Theories of holistic, integrated teaching-learning fittingly link with the need for meaningful social reconstruction in South Africa. Although significant changes have occurred in tertiary musical training since the publication of the Human Sciences Research Council report on effective music education in South Africa (1993), institutions in many respects remain modelled on European precursors. However, influential current opinion holds that effective decoloniality requires universities to be “capable of convening various publics” and thus “become points of convergence of and platforms for the redistribution of different kinds of knowledges” (Mbembe, 2015:6-7). Responding to the often insular perspectives of decolonisation, the notion of decoloniality questions dichotomous conceptualisations, expresses an increasing awareness of the actual complexities and contradictions of the postcolonial world, and strives to uncover the dynamic integration of local and wider networks and practices. In other words, educational practices can never be essentialised, nor justified on the basis of geography or history alone: Their continuous reinvention in evolving socio-scapes is a pedagogical as well as a social imperative.

The increasing prevalence of interactive learning practices similarly suggests that social boundaries in education no longer are treated as exclusive and impenetrable. While they at times may be crucial to specific practices and patterns of social identification, they also are instances of “contact zones” (Pratt, 1991:33-40) – spaces for interaction and reinvention. Our challenge in understanding musical practices accordingly “is to determine what degree of commonality and variation exists […] across perceived boundaries” (Kruger, 2006:40). Folkestad (2005, 2006) argues similarly that there is a need to explore all the dimensions of music teaching-learning, not by viewing the so-called informal-formal relationship (and relevant others) as antagonistic, but as mutually reinforcing. (Brashier, 2016) also emphasises the importance of teaching-learning as a dialogue across boundaries.

Higgins (2012:178) and Rohwer (2011:121-125) accordingly discuss the relationships between community music and schools and colleges that offer musical training. Community music may be defined as music-making integral to local experiences, histories, identities and aspirations (Finnegan, 2013; Kertz-Welzel, 2016:115-117). They

have specific objectives related to these qualities but usually lack formal curricula (Higgins, 2012:3-4). Community music is interactive by nature and typically emerges from relationships involving teachers and learners, conductors and performers or co-performers. These relationships are the obvious matrix for interactive teaching-learning practices and production of musical knowledge. Put differently, teaching-learning practices are a basic form of social behaviour, and a fundamental link between all musical institutions in any given environment. Rohwer (2011) identifies the marginalisation in higher learning institutions of community music, and motivates the need to recognise and account for the actual interdependence between community, school and college.

The above-mentioned perspectives speak to a tendency in literature on music education to locate 'formal' curricular tuition at the centre of experience and learning. Correspondingly, there is limited data available on the interaction between community musical practices and those that characterise secondary and tertiary education **(**Burnard & Dragovic, 2015:371). However, there is also increasing awareness of the extensive degree of musical activity in local communities and the implications this may have for higher institutional training (Emberly & Davidson, 2011:276-277; Folkestad, 2006:1-2). Folkestad (2005:279-280) notes that community musical performance and consumption typically involve social networking, a function whose disclosure may bring new epistemologies and teaching-learning strategies to music education.

My study correspondingly intends to show that conventional boundaries and dichotomies in music teaching-learning practice may be transcended by means of theories of community of practice (CoP). These theories are "the foundation of a perspective on knowing and learning that informs efforts to create learning systems" (Wenger, 2011:1-5; Wenger-Trayner, 2015;). In essence, the heart of theories of CoP is networking, and the core features of CoP may be summarised as follows:

- Social networks as the setting for collective learning;
- "[C]onnections among people across organisational and geographic boundaries";
- The recognition of all knowledge and skills;

- The development of “a shared repertoire of resources,” in particular “ways of addressing recurring problems”;
- Shared interests, activities, discussions and responsibilities;
- Mutual assistance.

Staff and student populations at higher educational institutions often harden into distinct ‘structures’ over protracted periods. However, given the preliminary indication that music students at NWU bring extensive relevant experiences to their tertiary study, it may be argued that teaching-learning practices in the School of Music do not involve distinct but integrated institutional and extracurricular epistemologies and strategies. I therefore propose that teaching-learning which is pedagogically sound and socially justifiable requires exploring the boundaries of conventional practices and in doing so the potential for redistributing different kinds of knowledge.

A possible redefined CoP will self-evidently benefit students because it will formally integrate extracurricular experiences into their tertiary training. This not only ought to promote institutional access, but also foster among students a sense of effective control over, and identification with, their training. Feeding relevant training back into communal musical practices in turn should promote their integration into wider social networks engaged in meaningful decoloniality. An evolving CoP also will enable the School of Music to continue carrying out its professional mandate by offering the best available teaching-learning in pursuit of NWU’s commitment towards “social responsiveness and an ethic of care” (NWU, 2016). My investigation may make a contribution towards informing perspectives on effective teaching-learning practices in music education research as well, since the challenges facing the School of Music are shared nationally and internationally.

The purpose of this investigation is therefore to explore the teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in the School of Music, and the implications this may have for institutional practices. My primary search question is: What

are the teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in NWU School of Music?

My secondary questions are:

- What is the nature of institutional and extracurricular teaching-learning practices and experiences?
- What are the relationships between institutional and extracurricular teaching-learning practices and experiences?
- How can these relationships be understood through the lens of Community of Practice (CoP)?
- What are the implications for practices in the School of Music of the nature of and relationship between institutional and extracurricular teaching-learning practices and experiences?

1.1 Research method and design

My investigation took form as a case study within a qualitative research framework geared towards understanding the views of students regarding the totality of their teaching-learning practices. General observations and personal interviews with participants aimed at eliciting thick descriptive data that offered meaningful interpretations of their feelings, perceptions and thoughts (Creswell, 2014:19; Thomas, 2013:111). This approach linked naturally with my insider status as a student in the school who had intensive interaction with the groupings from which my participants were selected (BA and Diploma in Music), adding further depth to my investigation.

The design for this research was that of a single, bounded, instrumental case study that allowed me to address relationships between institutional and extracurricular musical practices. My research involved actual social practice circumscribed by time (2013-2018), place (the School of Music), population (music students at NWU) and behaviour (teaching-learning practices). My procedure involved “detailed, in-depth data collection,”

designed to lead to the identification and discussion of case themes as described by various authors (Creswell, 2014:97-102; Kumar, 2014:115; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:37-38; Thomas, 2013:153; Yin, 2013:17).

1.2 Participants

Participants in my investigation were enrolled in two programmes in the School of Music, namely the BA (Music and Society) and Diploma in Music.[1] These programmes give admission to students with limited 'formal' training,[2] although, as explained below, they usually have extensive extracurricular musical experiences.

Ten student participants (five in the BA programme and five in the diploma programme) and five staff members were selected by means of purposive sampling:

Fig. 1. List of student participants

Names	Instrument	Program
Thabang	Voice	B.A
Johan	Voice	B.A
Telma	Voice	B.A
Nina	Voice	B.A
Chris	Voice	B.A

[1] The programmes are distinguished by their entrance requirements. The diploma programme requires "a) at least a Senior Certificate or equivalent qualification; b) an APS of at least 15; c) a student must take an aptitude test and have a successful interview with the selection panel." The BA program requires "a) A Diploma in Music or an equivalent qualification in which the modules for the final year were passed with and average of at least 60% or b) an APS of at least 21 and a music aptitude test as well as a practical audition must be completed successfully. For the practical audition, candidates will be required to perform at least three pieces that are on par with Grade III Unisa or Grade IV Royal Schools. c) Candidates will be expected to write a placement test for music theory of which the level will be on par with Grade II Unisa or Grade III Royal Schools." (NWU Arts Faculty Yearbook, 2017.)

[2] Such 'formal' training is linked to theory and practical examinations offered by the University of South Africa. For entrance to the BMus programme, Grade 5 Theory and Grade 7 Practical are required.

Nadia	Voice	Diploma
Mpho	Voice	Diploma
Kelvin	Voice	Diploma
Thomas	Pianist	Diploma
Sonya	Recorder	Diploma

Fig. 2. List of staff participants

Names	**Subject**	**Qualification**
Lebo	Voice	PhD
Ronaldo	Music education/Piano	PhD
Edwin	Music theory	PhD
Tumi	Brass	PhD
Denice	Voice	PhD

According to Kumar (2014:229) and Merriam and Tisdel, (2016:168), purposive sampling aims at facilitating a manageable, effective investigation. Sampling in this case study took the form of informal conversations with students and staff to determine the extent of their extracurricular engagement with musical practices, particularly their teaching-learning experiences.

Staff members were selected from the major disciplines involved in the programmes. Approximately half of the student population are vocalists, and two voice coaches were therefore selected for this study. The third staff member specialised in music education and the fourth in music theory. Most students who are not vocalists take one of a number of wind instruments for their practical training, and the fifth staff member therefore was a brass lecturer.

1.3 My role as researcher

The initial stimulus for this investigation was my rootedness in church and other forms of communal musical practices over the past fifteen years. My experiences in this regard not only motivated my decision to study music at a tertiary institution, but also sensitised me to the link between my personal and institutional experiences. Given my status as BA and BA Honours student in the School of Music, I came to realise through my intensive interaction with other students that they also are members of two musical worlds, namely those of 'home' and university, and that they too often struggled to reconcile them. Speaking to and performing with students in both programmes helped me to understand them and myself better, and aided my investigation.

1.4 Data collection

The data for this research study was collected by means of recorded semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2014:190) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016:105), interviews should be conducted in a familiar setting and the participants should be allowed to describe their feeling, experience and knowledge freely. My interviews were conducted individually in a convivial manner in familiar settings selected by participants who were given the opportunity to freely describe their experiences, opinions and feelings.

My questions integrated two central issues, namely personal circumstances and musical experiences. Because musical experiences are social experiences, participants were first invited to give an overview of their family's history, socio-economic status and educational level. When required, subsequent conversations were directed back to this overview in order to flesh out issues relevant to musical experience. This was followed by a condensed personal biography, involving family and community. Secondly, the conversation shifted to musical experiences. All experiences were explored, described and interpreted by means of a dialogue between participants and myself. Specific reference was made to core institutions like home, school and church as well as the role of the mass media.

1.4.1. Analysis and trustworthiness of data

Data accrued from my interviews and field reports was analysed by means of the ATLAS.ti[3] qualitative data analysis and research software. Following Creswell (2014:195-197) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015:207-208), the data collected was coded, categorized and finally themed. Data analysis involved coding and categorization into themes. Merriam and Tisdell (2015:238) advise the use of thick description, which generated detailed description and ensured consistency in my analysis, interpretation and presentation of data.

My status as a student in the School of Music since 2013 gave me the opportunity for meaningful engagement with students in the programmes concerned, and more specifically with the selected group (since the beginning of 2017). I conducted no less than two interviews with each participant, followed by shorter personal encounters to clarify certain issues. This allowed me to engage participants in member checking and to ensure that they were comfortable with my representation of their stories. My final report was made available to them before submission so that they could verify its accuracy.

1.5 Ethical considerations

My investigation was geared towards meeting the standards of ethical research as required by the Humanities Ethics Committee of NWU, and as suggested by Creswell (2013):

- I obtained permission from the Director of the School of Music for my study (Addendum B).
- Students were aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time (Addendum A).
- All participants were treated anonymously in the research report.
- The privacy and dignity of participants was respected at all times, and they were

[3] Atlas.ti is a workbench for qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, audio, video and graphical data.

given the opportunity to approve the final report before submission.

- No direct reference was made to individual staff members.
- I respected the integrity of NWU and the School of Music.
- I ensured that research data was solely used for the purpose explained in this proposal.
- I undertook to avoid plagiarism by acknowledging all sources in the required way.
- I attempted to avoid personal bias in my discussion and not misrepresent information.

1.6 Abbreviations and acronyms in this report

TL: Teaching-learning
TLP(s): Teaching and learning practice(s)
CoP: Community of practice.
NWU: North-West University

1.7. The struture of this report

The content of this study is presented in six chapters organised around my research objectives. The initial chapter presents the motivation for this study. Chapter two describes the literature surrounding the objective this study. It refers to different TLPs and describes the theory of CoP. Chapter three describes the research design, while chapter four discusses the themes and categories that emerged from the research data. Chapter five interprets the data described in chapter four through the lens of COP. Chapter six comprises a summary and conclusion derived from the interpretation of the data. It also offers recommendations for school policy and further researh.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter is an expansion of the introductory literature overview in Chapter 1. Section 2.1 deals with the concepts 'formal,' 'informal' and 'non-formal.' This discussion aims at describing the dichotomies often perceived to exist in domain of TL. Section 2.2 describes the theory of CoP. Section 2.3 discusses musical transmission.

2.1 Formal, informal and non-formal TLPs

The concepts of 'formal,' 'non-formal' and 'informal' TLP are commonly used in Western and African settings, and they may be explained as follows. Formal TLP is an 'official,' structured type of TLP in use by a public organisation or recognised private institution. Thorsén (1997:3) describes formal education as a government-geared system of education that runs through primary to secondary education. It involves clearly defined policies and processes (Parreira, 2019), as well as certification by national education authorities.

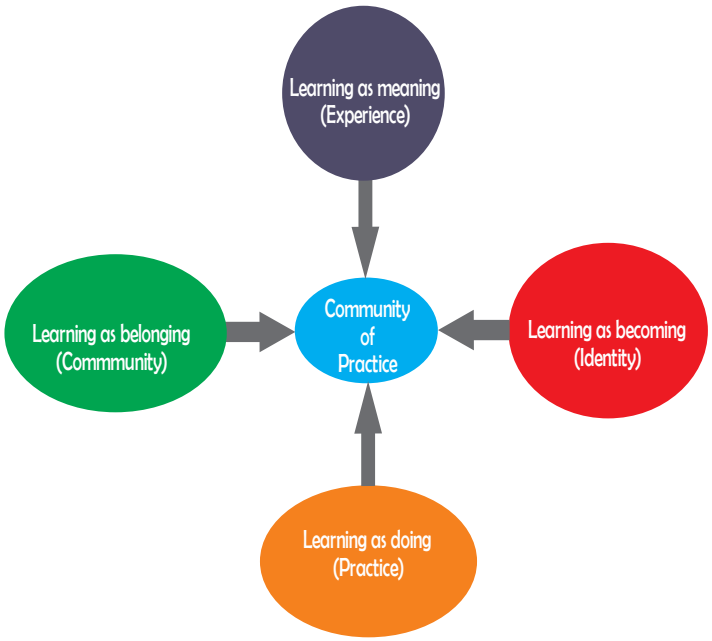
Non-formal TLP is any structured and organised TLP that is institutionalised and offered by private or non-governmental educational providers (Campbell *et al.,* 2008:41; Thorsén, 1997:3). It is not tied to any national curriculum and does not have to lead to a formal level of qualification that is recognised by relevant national education authorities. People from all age groups can participate in courses, seminars or workshops, and their participation involves free, deliberate choice (Parreira, 2019).

Informal TLP involves constant interaction within the context of work, family and leisure. It is not institutionalised and does not require external support (Parreira, 2019). Thorsén (1997:3) similarly explains that it involves life-long learning which takes place within family and peer groups, often without any clear educational objectives. Folkestad (2006:137) in turn notes that informal learning in music thus features integrated learning on a holistic level.

These TLPs cannot be treated dichotomously. According to Thorsén (1997:3), any boundaries between formal and informal education are disrupted by community TLPs outside school settings, involving oral transmission between parents and children, and within communities at large (Espeland, 2010:134). Education practices are therefore spreading across cultures and educational boundaries, and are increasingly being recognised as part of the formal as well as informal environment (Espeland, 2010:129). Informal learning is accordingly being described and analysed by researchers to a greater extent than ever before (Espeland, 2010:134). It not only features in home settings, but also within public institutions. It has become readily available by means of technology and the internet. While its setting is informal, its pedagogic principles are usually those of formal educational practice. In turn, the core characteristics of informal learning practices have also penetrated formal learning. Some treat this as the renewal of formal education, whereas others see it as a threat to mainstream practice (Espeland, 2010:134). I will explore this issue further by means of the theory of CoP.

2.2 Community of practice

Fig 3. CoP framework, adapted from Wenger (1998:5)



2.2.1 Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation

While studying apprenticeships, Lave and Wenger (1991:34) realised that all the cases they studied were situated historically and culturally, and thus related to all the activity around them. How then could learning be situated without having or placing a limitation on learning? This brought about the conception of situated learning as a bridge between learning through which cognition was foregrounded and learning which was taken primarily as a social practice through legitimate peripheral participation (Kenny, 2016:11; Lave & Wenger, 1991:34-35). According to Lave and Wenger (1991:56),

> legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice.

This journey of participation is also viewed as a way of learning in which the individual "is both absorbing and being absorbed in a culture or practice" (Kenny, 2016:112). Learning does not mean that a person masters one specific task, but rather that one becomes a 'new' person within CoP. In other words, legitimate peripheral participation in CoP is not only defined by membership in a community. It is also characterised by how the member evolves (Lave & Wenger, 1991:95).

The theory of CoP resulted from a refinement of legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning. CoP has since become a kind of social learning theory that is equipped with its own set of assumption and focus (Kenny, 2016:17; Wenger, 1998:1-5). Assumptions are based on consistent analysis through participation in CoP which yields a framework through which a regular set of general principles and recommendations for understanding and facilitating learning can be derived (Kenny, 2016:15-29).

Wenger (1998:5) identifies the four constructs of his theory as *meaning*, *practice*, *identity* and *community*. This is based on the principle that people are social beings; knowledge is a matter of know-how concerning valued enterprise; knowledge is a matter of people's participation in this enterprise; and finally, that learning produces meaning. Each of these constructs is described below.

CoPs are everywhere, and the individual may belong to several simultaneously (Wenger, 1998:7). CoPs are often left unexamined because they are "so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit focus," which results in them being taken for granted (Wenger, 1998:7). Church, family life, home, the school environment and extracurricular activities are a few examples of some of the many CoPs to which any individual can belong as either a core or a tangential member (Wenger, 1998:56). The degree of involvement can evolve as the individual grows, learns and moves to other communities of practice, or becomes an essential figure in a specific community of practice (Wenger, 1998:56).

2.2.2 Learning as meaning

According to Wenger (1998:51-54), meaning is a negotiated process through active engagement in a specific community of practice and thus emerges from human engagement in the social world. This process of negotiation generally involves dismissal, reinterpretation, modification and confirmation of meaning. An individual develops *patterns* as he engages in practice (Wenger, 1998). These patterns develop to become *routines*. As routines are repeated, the individual reflects and negotiates his or her meaning when new or unexpected events alter existing meaning. The new meaning developed from this experience will be added to the body of knowledge of the community for future reference or will be integrated into the routine (Pyrko *et al.*, 2017:391-392).

The diverse processes in which the members of a CoP engage, is what Wenger regards as *participation* (Wenger, 1998:55). Participation entails a range of processes both personal and social: working together, talking, thinking and feeling. Participation is an active process that includes both positive and negative relationships between members

of a CoP. There could be collaboration and also competition amongst members. What is essential is that participation shapes the individual as a member of a CoP, as the individual also shapes the community. Being a member of a CoP is a full-time venture regardless whether one is active or not, because individual identity cannot be deactivated (Kenny, 2016:29). When church choristers go home, for instance, they are still singers, even though they may be not singing there.

The physical manifestation of the active process in a CoP is known as *reification* (Wenger: 2008:58). Reification produces objects that exemplify shared experience. An example would be reading a car manual to perform a task that could have been learnt through experience. The object may be used to perform the task because it provides a procedure that codifies the actions required for the process. This can also be a musical score that is used as a way to preserve the action of the CoP for later use.

Participation and reification together allow one to negotiate meaning in a CoP. In a curricular setting, this negotiation may be made visible through teaching and learning practices such as tests, surveys, and discussion boards (Dixon, 2018:22). These practices show the lecturer what the students already know and what they need to know, which in turn informs further lessons. An individual can only become a full member of a community through participation and reification (Wenger, 1998:70).

2.2.3 Learning as belonging (community)

CoPs depend on the complementary contribution as well as the overlapping ability of members (Wenger, 1998:76). In as much as the membership of a CoP is to some aspect homogenous, the diversity of the groups is also vital to its function (Kenny, 2016:21; Wenger, 1998:75). A CoP with a specific specialisation will enrich a community made up of complementary competencies. Similarly, a community that is made up of peers that share a specialisation will help to enrich their experiences. Both homogeneity and diversity may be viewed as an asset to the CoP (Wenger, 1998:75). Wenger (2011:1-3)

identifies the three dimensions of the relationship between communities as *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise* and *shared repertoire*.

2.2.4 Mutual engagement

Mutual engagement refers to participants engaging actively with one another and negotiating shared meaning (Printy, 2008:202; Wenger, 1998:73-74). This process cannot take place in the abstract; hence mutual engagement occurs when people are included in the decision-making and actions that affect the CoP to which they belong. Newcomers may have some influence at the inception of their engagement in the community, but their influence on the decisions and actions of the CoP will be minimal. However, their influence increases as they transcend to full participation (Dixon, 2018:23-24; Wenger, 1998:73-74).

Mutual engagement in a CoP is not always peaceful or harmonious (Wenger, 1998:75). Conflict, disagreement and tension are also aspects of interpersonal engagement. These negative attributes may also be the core characteristics of some CoPs. Competition, challenges and disagreement may be regarded or construed as a form of participation (Wenger, 1998:77). Such attributes can even reveal a higher level of commitment to the community than one may assume. A CoP enriches discourse when members are free to express opposing viewpoints. The shared practices of CoP reveal the complexity and diversity of human interactions as well as a complex mixture of teamwork and conflict.

2.2.5 Joint enterprise

The second dimension of a CoP is joint enterprise. Having a joint enterprise does not necessarily mean that everyone is doing the same thing. Neither does it mean that everyone has the same working condition or is in full agreement. Members of a community could be said to have a joint enterprise when their actions are mutually dependent and interconnected (Kenny, 2016:110; Wenger, 1998:77-78). According to Wenger (1998:79-80), CoP is not self-contained; hence the joint enterprise is shaped by

the position of the practice in a broader institution. Nonetheless, the joint enterprise responds to the system or institution, and the institution does not control it. Wenger (1999) explains that

> negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to relationships of mutual accountability among those involved. These relations of accountability include what matters and what does not, what is important and why it is important, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore […] when actions and artefacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement.

Furthermore, joint enterprise is never static, and it is therefore continually negotiated. The collective process of this negotiation reflects the full complexity of mutual engagement. In the end, it creates mutual accountability between the participants and this becomes an integral part of the practice (Kenny, 2016:116; Wenger, 1998:77-78).

2.2.6 Shared repertoire

The final dimension of CoP, according to Lave and Wenger (1991:21), involves the relationship between community and practice as shared repertoire. Shared repertoire simply means that in the act of joint enterprise, the CoP will develop resources which they will use to negotiate meaning over time (Kenny, 2016:121; Wenger, 1998:83). The elements of the shared repertoire are heterogeneous, but they gain coherence as they are applied or used repeatedly by the CoP. The shared repertoire may include words, symbols, routines, etc.; and also the way the members express their identities as members of the CoP (Kenny, 2016:18).

2.2.7 Brokering

Brokering takes place when individual expertise from multiple CoPs crosses from one to another, strengthening all the CoPs. Brokering occurs when a participant brings a set of skills and experiences or boundary objects from one CoP to another for enrichment

(Partti, 2014:13). Wenger (1998:108-110) argues that brokering can be attributed to the unique set of skills each member in a CoP possesses and a CoP's interactions with other CoPs.

Creech *et al.* (2008:230-232) studied the similarities and differences amongst non-classical and classical musicians and found that musicians with diverse membership of various CoPs, who brokered the most, tended to reflect a more progressive attitude towards many factors, including performance and musical skills. In higher education, Talbot (2017:15) similarly found that CoPs could sometimes be difficult to negotiate by students who feel like outsiders. She described experiencing boundaries of many kinds during her transition from secondary to tertiary education. Social boundaries exacerbated the difficulties she experienced as she dealt with racial and socioeconomic statuses. These experiences involved frustrating attempts to cross boundaries from one world to another (Talbot, 2017:15-17). Nonetheless, to control an institution, the authority of an individual is crucial, yet mediated by communities.

2.2.8 Learning as doing (practice)

The negotiation of meaning is a temporal process; hence one also needs to understand practice in this dimension (Wenger, 1998:155). Some CoPs exist over centuries, like a group of musicians who transfer their musical craft from one generation to the next. Some of them may be short-lived whereas others are intense enough to give rise to indigenous knowledge and further transform the identity of the people who are involved in them (Wenger, 1998:86; Wenger, 2011:2). The development of practice takes time, but what defines a practice is not bound to a specific minimum amount of time – rather, it has a purpose of sustaining required mutual engagement in the pursuance of an enterprise together, to share substantial learning (Wenger, 1998:85). Put simply, "practices are things we do and develop" (Bourdieu, 2002:230). Bourdieu (1977) explains that "knowledge is gained through participation in a social world by the integration of agent, world and activity." Lave and Wenger (1991) further expand on this view of social practice, claiming:

> Learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with and arising from socially constituted, objective forms and systems of activity; on one hand, agent subjective and intersubjective understanding of them, on the other, mutually constituting both world and its experienced form.

In other words, our experiences are not static: they interact and are not fixed. Forms of participation and reification diverge and converge continually. In moments of meaning they come in contact to affect each other (Wenger, 1998:87). Engagement in practice, in its multidimensional complexity, is both the stage and the object; or both the road and the destination. What we learn is not static subject matter but rather the process of engagement, and participation for developing ongoing practice (Wenger, 1998:95). Practices are the history of mutual engagement, negotiation of enterprise and development of repertoire, whereas learning in practice includes the process of evolving a form of mutual agreement, understanding and tuning their enterprise and developing their repertoire, style and discourse (Wenger, 1998:95).

2.2.9 Learning as becoming (identity)

According to (Kenny, 2014:18), each member of a CoP occupies a unique place in the domain and gains unique identity that is further defined in the process of engagement. Engagement in practice provides one with a certain experience of participation and the attention of the community to reify one as a participant. The experience of identity is the way of being in the world and not equivalent to self-image because there is no fully lived experience of engagement in practice (Wenger, 1998:151). Identity formation within the social world can enhance our participation within the community. Pitts (2005:30) maintains that participation in music contributes to the development of participants' identity and also provides a specific context where their behaviour and social relation may flourish. Wenger (1998:164) argues that "we do not only produce our identity through the practices we engage in; we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in." Put differently, our relation to CoP involves both participation and non-participation;

hence our identities are shaped by the combination of the two (Wenger, 1998:164-165). Macdonald and Wilson (2005:413) emphasise that there is a constant state of negotiation in the mutual process of individual and collective identity formation, and therefore "this identity is important to continuing and participating in the music; it is negotiated in the group context in relation to individual musical identities and the perceived disposition of others."

2.3 Musical transmission

2.3.1 Performance and teaching-learning in Africa: The basics

According to Blacking (1973:43), the primary function of African music (with specific reference to Venda music) is "to involve people in shared experiences within the framework of their cultural experience." This is what constitutes the primary foundation of musical performance and TLP (Dei, 2000:124). A typical performance setting in Africa is that of storytelling that occurs in the evening when children and adults gather to listen to folktales that involve intellectual and performance skills, as well as morals and values (Epskamp, 1992:7; Nketia, 1975:8). Thus, music is something that you do in community, "rather than something that you (formally) learn" (Carver *et al.,* 2012:13). People usually are encouraged to participate in performances of which the overall success is determined by a heightened awareness of others (Turino, 2008:26). Chernoff also notes that the purpose of music in the African life system is socialisation "within the complex balance of community activities […] they encourage participation to enhance possibilities for personal happiness and community realisation (Chernoff, 1979:154-162).

Induction into musical performance may involve formal and/or informal TLPs. Formal practices serve those who want to become music specialists, and this kind of training often involves apprenticeship to expert musicians (Onuchukwu, 1994:54-60). Informal practices, however, develop naturally from children's environments, often without restriction regarding place and time (Omibiyi, 1987:2). Children first learn unconsciously from their mother, and subsequently from their peers (Smith, 1962:6). Both formal and

informal practices rely on imitation, rote, observation and slow absorption (Omibiyi, 1987:3).

2.3.2 Musical transmission: The orality-literacy dichotomy

Musical transmission refers to the way music is transferred from one individual or group to another, while oral transmission refers to the transfer of information by integrated oral and aural means (Patterson, 2015:36). Whereas orality refers to a spoken, chanted or sung delivery, aurality refers to its reception, i.e. that which is heard. When oral transmission is mentioned below, it refers to the combination of both elements. Literate transmission, in turn, involves the representation of musical sound by means of a variety of symbols inscribed in clay, printed on vellum or paper, or reproduced digitally.

There is a popular perception of orality as a ‘weaker’ or outdated mode of musical expression. However, orality is a core feature of all musical transmission, even in literate cultures, and it continues to be inextricably linked with language, tradition and cultural reproduction across the world (Patterson, 2015:35). The earliest pneumatic notation simply aided the experienced singer to recall from memory what had already been produced orally (Sramek, 2013:215; Treitler, 1981:477). Both oral and notated practices involve participation, imitation, repetition and improvisation (Epskamp, 1992:12). They should therefore not be viewed as opposites, but rather as subtle, complex and connected practices (Patterson, 2015:3).

2.3.3 Mediated orality

Mediated orality is described as anything that aids the oral transmission process (Salavuo, 2008:3). Mediated orality is typically associated with technology in the contemporary world. Technology has enabled oral transmission by electronic means. Mediated oral transmission thus has come to permeate music education.

According to Salavuo (2008:121-136), the internet has become part of our musical lives. It offers opportunities for networking by enabling the “externalisation” and exchange of musical experiences and ideas. Constant activity on YouTube and other social media includes uploading, listening to and recommending music, providing feedback and engaging in joint projects: This is the work of mediated oral transmission in late modern society (Patterson, 2015:9).

Technology therefore does not only play a role in musical communication and networking, but also offers educational opportunities in music (Patterson, 2015:43). The current young generation is growing up with technological devices like mobile phones, computers, tablets and laptops that give instant access to music on the internet (Salajan *et al.*, 2010:1393). The availability of these devices has created many opportunities for direct and indirect music-learning, especially in situations where there are no teachers. Such teaching-learning often takes places even though the objective may be to play video games, watch music videos, or just listen to music. Such musical engagement has promoted creativity and oral transmission, leading to a revolution in teaching-learning (Finnegan, 1989:138; Hallam *et al.*, 2009:151-162; Patterson, 2015:42).

Contemporary music media in particular offers a repetitive, mediated orality “that encourages patterns, shapes and formulae for music” (Patterson, 2015:43). In other words, technology reinforces the kind of learning that oral transmission entails. It involves the absorption and recalling of extensive amounts of data that supersedes “pure memorisation” (Marsh, 1999:3).

The growing role of oral transmission in education is underpinned by an awareness of its socially integrated nature (Green, 2017), as most people are exposed to recorded and live music at home, school, college, work, social gatherings and public spaces. While this practice harbours the potential for a revolution in musical teaching-learning, Finnegan (2016:138) is doubtful that this potential is fully and pervasively realised in education. This opportunity has not fully been seized by the teachers in different learning spaces.

2.3.4 Musical transmission: The colonial legacy

Musical TLPs in South Africa are rooted in colonial church activity. European music education took place non-formally in churches and church schools. Most active in this regard were mission churches run by Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and other denominations (Haynes, 2010:223; Herbst, 2005:262). Musical transmission in these churches involved the use of tonic sol-fa (hereafter, sol-fa), which also found its way into government schools during the latter half of the 19th century (Haynes, 2010:226; Stevens, 2007:37). It effected a high level of public musical literacy, and remains the backbone of choral singing in many communities. Songs are transcribed into sol-fa for use in schools, churches and community choirs, while a significant number of composers still write in sol-fa (Thorsén, 1997:6).

Music education in South Africa after 1994 was challenged to overcome educational segregation. This resulted in a move towards an integrated, multicultural system of education, driven by "a policy of support for exchange among different groups to enrich all, while respecting and preserving the integrity of each" (Hauptfleisch, 1991; Herbst *et al.*, 2005).

The Human Sciences Research Council (1993) identified three basic challenges for music education. They related to coherence, relevance and curriculum-in-use, and contributed towards disparity between educational policy and practice (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999). Two decades later, Morrow *et al.* (2005), reporting on the South African curriculum for the twenty-first-century, stated that many curriculum teaching-learning goals still were not being achieved. In particular, there was dislocation between actual communal musical experiences and music education at school. Multicultural music education, in response, sought "ways to match program offering to student's needs, to understand differentiated learning modalities, to develop social transaction skills, and to gain as teachers the cultural competence to communicate music – any music – to young people of various socio-cultural backgrounds" (Campbell, 2002:31). Recurriculation thus aimed at addressing "the past neglect of indigenous knowledge system and overbearing

emphasis on written musical literacy" as well as the "strict regime of drill and practice instead of an approach that saw learning as process of constant delivery" (Herbst *et al.*, 2005:264).

2.4 Summary

The following core issues emerge from my literature review:

- Formal, informal and non-formal TLPs share particular characteristics, and can be ambiguous. They nevertheless appear commonly in literature, and have application. However, they must be used critically.

- Learning is primarily a social practice. It is an enduring process in which individuals absorb and shape TLPs. As routines are repeated, they reflect on and negotiate meanings that expand knowledge and TLPs.

- Homogeneity and diversity involve complementary competencies, and are natural assets of CoP.

- Conflict, disagreement and competition also are natural features of CoP. They shape interpersonal engagement, influence outlooks and develop TLPs.

- The primary foundation of musical performance and its TLPs is the involvement of participants in shared experiences within the framework of their culture.

- Orality is a fundamental quality of musical transmission, also in musically literate cultures. Oral and notated practices may be interconnected rather than opposing. They involve participation, observation and slow absorption by means of imitation, repetition and improvisation.

- Oral musical transmission in contemporary societies is characterised by electronic

mass media technology. Social media and electronic platforms, and devices for accessing them, are creating new opportunities teaching-learning.

- Of colonial origin, the tonic sol-fa notation system remains central to music TLPs in schools, churches and community choirs.

- There have been ongoing efforts since 1994 to address the rupture between community musical experiences and music education. Theory and policy relate to learners' needs, different learning modalities, the development of interpersonal skills and the empowerment of teachers.

Chapter 3: Research design

This chapter explores the research design and method that inform this study, based on the approach discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (2013:25). The research design is qualitative, and I invoke an interpretivist paradigm. The strategy of inquiry is an intrinsic case study. My role as a researcher, the data collection process and the data analysis are explained. The validation of this research, as well as ethical concerns, are also discussed.

3.1 Research approach

This study is qualitative in nature, as it helps us to understand a phenomenon in a natural setting as well as the meaning that participants associate with their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013:3; Mayan, 2009:11; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:6). Qualitative research is directed at understanding people, and particularly the meanings they ascribe to a social or human problem as they engage the world (Creswell, 2014:4; Merriam, 2009:5).

This study is not aimed at testing a theory or hypothesis, but rather at understanding its subject matter by gathering data to build a concept, or theory, as the core characteristic of inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:7). However, it is essential to note that there is a presence of theory in all qualitative research, which as such refines perspectives in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:7).

This study adopts the theoretical lens of CoP to explore the experiences of participants about teaching-learning in diverse learning spaces, and hence provides a holistic view of their musical experiences in relation to their social life. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016:7), every investigation is informed by a discipline-specific theoretical framework that enables one to focus on the inquiry and to further interpret data. However, the theoretical framework is not tested deductively the way it would be in an experiment; instead, it informs the way we inductively learn in the field.

The final product of qualitative research is richly descriptive. The description includes the context, the participants that are involved, and the activities under scrutiny. Also, the research contains data in the form of quotes from documents, participant interviews, excerpts from videotapes and electronic communication, or a combination of these to support findings of the study (Creswell, 2014:185-186; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:14-17). All these excerpts and quotes contribute to the descriptive nature of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:7). The next chapter accordingly offers data from transcribed participant interviews that are relevant to this study.

3.2 The interpretivist paradigm

A paradigm is a shared worldview that encompasses the assumptions, values and practices shared by a research community. It provides an overarching framework that guides how a problem is solved (Braun & Clarke, 2013:15-16; Schwandt, 2001). Put differently, it defines the philosophical orientation of the researcher and as such, has significant implications for decision-making.

An interpretivist paradigm informs this qualitative research. This approach is commonly used in the field of social sciences (Willis *et al.*, 2007:6; Yin, 2013:31). An interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the value of what the world means to the participants of a study; so it tends to consider subjective perceptions of social and cultural contexts (Willis *et al.*, 2007:6). As mentioned, the purpose of the interpretivist paradigm is not to test theory or measure anything, but rather to understand experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:6; Willis *et al.*, 2007:6).

The interpretivist paradigm argues that the reason human beings behave the way they do, is in part due to their subjective perception of the social environment (Creswell, 2013:62). This paradigm allowed me to see through the perception and experience of participants. My insight enabled me to organise and interpret my data.

3.3 Strategy of inquiry

A strategy of inquiry refers to the skills, assumptions, and practices that the researcher employs to move from a paradigm to the empirical world. It also informs the decision of the researcher regarding the method that could be used to collect and analyse empirical materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013:13). The strategy of inquiry is the application of the paradigm to the complete framework of the research study. In essence, the framework of this research study will be guided by the strategy of inquiry.

The strategy of inquiry used for this research is that of a case study. It enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013:170; Merriam, 2009:203; Thomas, 2013:591; Yin, 2013:48). Merriam and Tisdell (2015:7) describe a case study as a basic qualitative strategy that shares some defining characteristics of other forms of qualitative inquiry.

A case study is dominantly used in qualitative research. A case could be an individual, a group, or a community, an episode, an event, a town or a city. It is important to note that a case study population is treated as an entity (Kumar, 2011:123). A case is a bounded system that evolves over time; it provides a holistic description and in-depth data from multiple sources of information (usually interviews, observations, audio-visual material, documents and reports). They relate to a contemporary phenomenon (the case) within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between contexts may not be clearly evident. (Kumar, 2011:123; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:102-103; Yin, 2013:16).

Researchers are the primary instrument for data collection in a case study. This factor is argued to be essential because they are both responsive and adaptive in the research process. At the same time, it draws attention to the need for assessing and reporting biases that may arise through the course of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:58-59).

I applied an inductive investigative strategy, which resulted in a detailed description because I spent a substantial amount of time in natural interview settings. The interviews,

as well as the primary data, reveal variables, and hence the findings are inductive (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:250).

3.4 The role of the researcher

The conditions that may influence research include the demographic profile (age, race, ethnicity) of the researcher (Yin, 2010:42).This does not only affect the research lens through which the events are interpreted, but it could also affect how the participants reflexively react to researcher's presence, including the participants' choice of topic or responses in the conversation. I come from Nigeria, and my identity as fellow African contributed to participants' openness towards discussion.

I was a student of the NWU School of Music for six years. This prolonged engagement in the school gave me a privileged insight into the problem addressed in this study. Yin (2010:42) notes that such participation offers the advantage of insider research.

I have also been involved in various musical activities in church and local communities, both in and outside South Africa. I was engaged in leading multiple choirs in diverse learning spaces, and this allowed me to have first-hand experience of challenges related to teaching-learning outside the university setting.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016:7), a researcher in a qualitative case study serves as a primary instrument of data collection and analysis. My primary role in this research study included the following: preparing and conducting interviews with students and lecturers; collating relevant documents such as reports and study guides; and analysing and presenting the data.

3.5 Data collection

According to (Yin, 2010:130), "data are the smallest or lowest entities or recorded elements resulting from some experience, observation, experiment, or other similar

situation." Put simply, data are bits of information that are found in our environment. Saldaña (2011:26) notes that data could be described as anything that informs a study, be it an interview transcript or other related documents or even the researcher's knowledge base: all contribute to an understanding of a specific phenomenon.

Creswell (2014:185) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016:7) further explain that qualitative research makes use of multiple forms of data, which include interviews and documents because they help to provide adequate information for in-depth review. For this study, I relied primarily on interviews, supported by the relevant NWU yearbook and study guides.

3.5.1 The semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interviews conducted in this study align with the characteristics of a case study. Interviews were conducted to determine the value ascribed to the meanings my subjects attach to their experiences. Yin (2010:132) emphasises that these meanings are what we look for to deduce information.

Semi-structured interviews were the best fit for data collection for this study because I sought to understand the musical TLPs of students and staff. I assumed that their TLPs would be similar in certain aspects and diverse in others, and for this reason it was needed to ask open-ended questions.

Jesson *et al.* (2011:104) describe a semi-structured interview as a technique by means of which data is gathered and synthesised with critically evaluated findings. A semi-structured interview implies that the questions are not asked in a specific order. The questions are open-ended, and as such they aim at eliciting elaborate answers. Further questions evolve during conversations or interviews, while focusing on the research topic, purpose, and questions that form the basis of a research study (Saldaña, 2011:32-33). In essence, a semi-structured interview allows the researcher and the participants to engage in dialogue. While questions may be formulated beforehand (Merriam, 2009:12), they should only guide and not dictate interviews. Questions may also be modified with regards

to participants' responses (Merriam, 2009:12-13), while follow-up interviews may be organised to clarify some points (Saldaña, 2011:38). This strategy not only helps to establish a rapport with participants but also to focus on matters of interest to the participants (Jesson *et al.*, 2011:104; Smith, 2003:58).

The formulation of interview questions went through various stages. They were extracted from the central questions of this research study (chapter 1, addendum C). The questions for staff were furthermore formulated in accordance with the outcomes of the respective modules as contained in the applicable NWU yearbook, as well as themes that emerged from student interviews.

Structured questions firstly aimed to obtain basic demographic data from participants, whereas subsequent questions were semi-structured. The questions were not asked in any particular order. Conversations were allowed to evolve relatively freely, following responses from participants.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be described as the process of interpreting the views and opinions of the participants about a situation (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:461). According to O'Leary (2014:300), data analysis entails keeping a keen sense of the whole project, which involves reflection on research questions; aims and objectives; methodological constraints; and relevant theory.

To analyse the data, one needs to construct a mental picture of the overall project. I engaged continuously with my data during collection. This helped to develop and focus my thinking, and to code my data (Miles *et al.*, 2018:158-162). In Chapter 4 the data are described according to the themes that emerged.

My data analysis involved descriptive-level analysis and conceptual-level analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013:185-186). Pattern coding helped to condense a large amount of data into

smaller units. This coding was done in accordance with the steps suggested by Friese (2014), which entails that the researcher organises the raw data into codes, categories and themes, to enable interpretation and the drawing of conclusions (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:461-462).

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research is achieved through adopting a strategy to ensure the credibility of the researcher's work. This means that the research procedure has to be documented in such a way that other people may also review it. Specifically, the data must be accessible to participants and other researchers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:106-107; Yin, 2010:19).

Peer briefing took place throughout this study as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016:249). Peer briefing is a process of engaging with colleagues and others that should hold an impartial view about the work in question. This report was supervised by two staff who offered guidance and ensured it remained within its stated limits. In addition, the quality of this research study will be open to public scrutiny through its placing in the NWU library.

The second requirement for trustworthiness is methodical research (Sousa, 2014:213). This means that the researcher has to follow a systematic and orderly set of procedures. There should be adequate room for discovery and allowance of unanticipated events that may occur during the study (Yin, 2010:21-20). My study met this requirement, as I identified the need to expand initial student interviews with follow-up conversations, and to include selected lecturers in the research population, which was not an initial objective.

As a set procedure, research should be devoid of unexplained bias and deliberate distortion (Yin, 2010:21). My awareness of data distortion sensitised me to the need to report the views and experiences of interviewees as faithfully as possible. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:6) note that shortcomings and biases are to be expected and must be

accounted for in relation to data collection and interpretation. I correspondingly applied the theory of CoP to guide this study. It helped me to refine my initial perception that there was a dichotomy between curricular and extracurricular teaching-learning domains. I initially established a hierarchy of various forms of learning (‘formal’ and ‘informal’) rather than accepting teaching-learning as spanning perceived boundaries.

3.8 Ethics

Ethical dilemmas may arise in a research study with regards to the nature of data collection and presentation (Merriam, 2009:75). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016:131) and Yin (2010:44-55), all research involving human participants needs to be reviewed as well approved from an ethical standpoint to ensure that participants are not harmed in any way. Studies that involve human participants require prior approval from an institutional review board. This research study obtained approval from the NWU ethics authority.

I also obtained permission from the Director of the School of Music at NWU (addendum B), as well as informed consent from participants (addendum A). Informed consent implies that the participants are made aware of the type and purpose of information involved, and how they are expected to participate in a study (Kumar, 2011:219-220). I accordingly ensured that the participants participated voluntarily. They readily accepted to be part of this study, partly because I approached them personally and also because of my close relationship with most of them, which gave them the comfort to trust me with the information they shared.

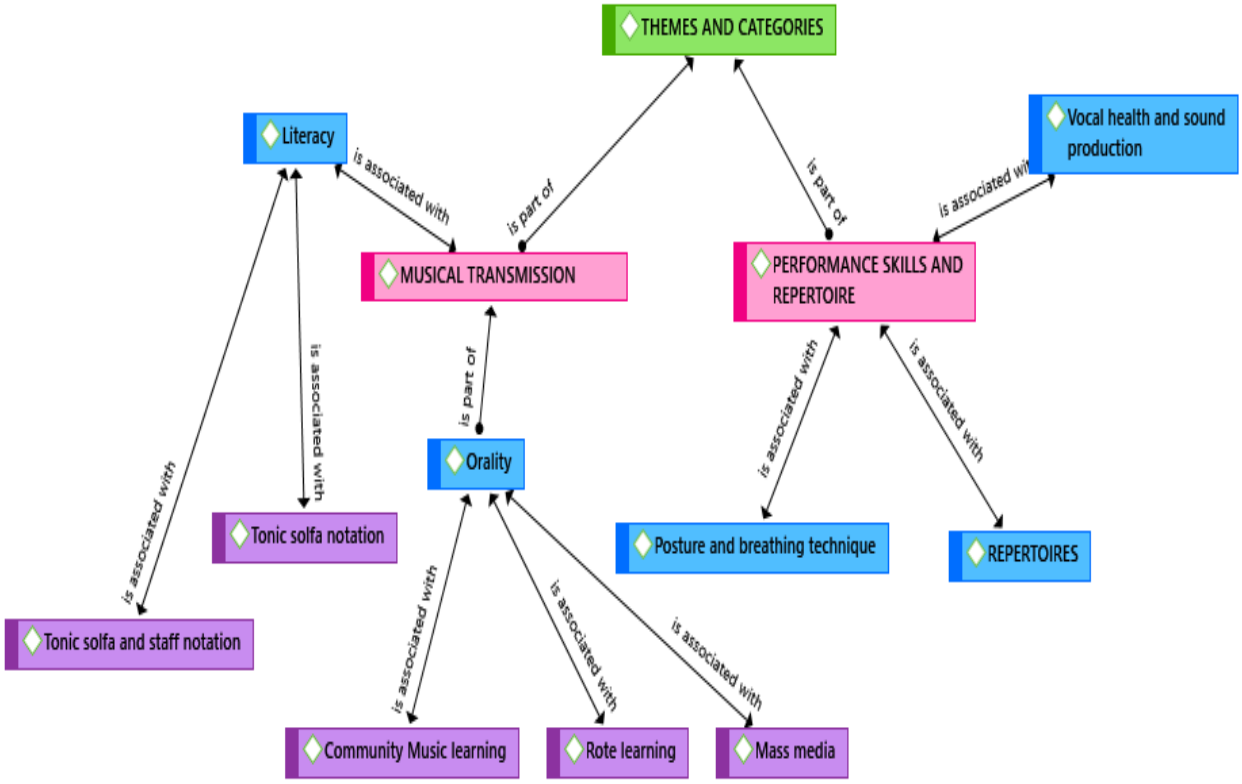
Because confidentiality of information shared by participants is essential for this research study (Kumar, 2011:221), the identity of the participants of this study is protected by the use of pseudonyms.

Chapter 4: Data description

This chapter presents and describes data from interviews with ten students and five teaching staff. Interview transcripts were loaded and analysed by means of Atlas.ti8 software. Analysis involved coding and re-coding, followed by categorising and thematisation.

Discussion is initiated (4.1) with short descriptions of the institutions of learning involved in this study. This is followed by a presentation of two emergent themes, namely musical transmission (4.2 and 4.3) and performance skills and repertoire (4.4). Musical transmission involves the categories of orality (4.2.1) and literacy (4.2.2). Orality is shown to refer to community teaching-learning (4.2.1), rote learning (4.2.2), and the mass media (4.2.3). Literacy, in turn, involves tonic sol-fa (4.3.1) and the integration of tonic sol-fa and staff notation (4.3.2). While performance skills and repertoire may be conceived as distinct, they emerge as interrelated and are therefore treated as a single theme. This theme addresses posture and breathing technique (4.4.1), vocal health and sound production (4.4.2) and repertoire (4.4.3).

Fig 4. Diagrammatic representation of emergent themes and categories



4.1 Institutions of teaching-learning

Institutions of teaching and learning include all the spaces for musical teaching-learning as described by participants: home, Sunday school, church choirs, community choirs, high school choirs and musical activities, and the School of Music at North-West University.

Home: Home may have various meanings, but according to this study, it is an institution that provides the basis of teaching-learning.

Sunday school: Sunday schools are church institutions that provide children with knowledge of the scripture as well as the roots of religious musical practice.

Church choirs: All participants in this study have been members of church choirs except for Sonya, who is a recorder player. Choir performance is part of church liturgy, and these choirs also participate in competitions.

Community choirs: These are institutions directed by amateur and professional musicians, mostly with a view towards competitive participation. Community choirs have direct links to church choirs, and they share conductors and members. Community choirs usually comprise members from various church choirs.

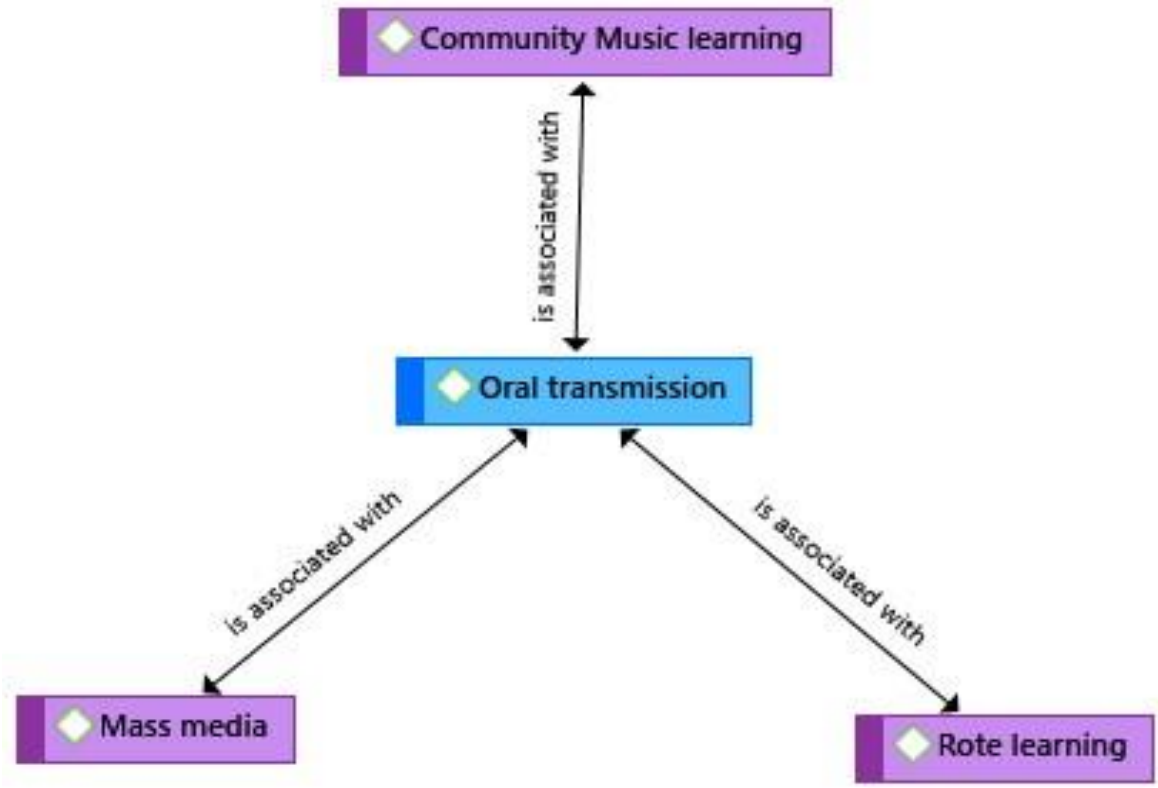
High school choirs: High school choirs are part of the community networks that include church and community choirs. Membership is restricted to particular schools, and conductors usually are members of staff. As in the case of church and community choirs, high school choirs also enter competitions, and winning choirs offer their school much coveted prestige.

The School of Music at North-West University: The school was founded in c. 1945, and offers three undergraduate programmes, namely BMus, BA Music and the Diploma in Music. Most students take singing (half of the student population) or wind instruments as their practical subject. The school also has a choir and various orchestras and smaller instrumental ensembles.

4.2 Oral transmission

As explained in the first two chapters, oral transmission in music involves the transfer of knowledge and skills by aural-oral means**.** This practice marks all the institutions of teaching-learning listed above. Staff member Ronaldo remarked in this regard that “some scores are complicated but progress is made through orality. If a medal is to be given, Africans can be the best in the world in terms of the oral learning style in music because many of them do not learn from scores.”

Fig 5. Oral transmission



4.2.1 Community teaching-learning

As indicated above, home, church, school and community musical lives are interrelated. The relationship between home and church is particularly intimate, and musical training and performance at home is continued in practices at church.

The families of participants were the major agent of oral transmission. Parents and siblings often performed and taught each other church hymns. Thabang explained that her father always brought his family together after church services to “sing the hymns they sang in church earlier that day.” Johan, Sonya and Telma had similar experiences of singing church music together at home. According to Telma, performance and learning took on the form of a social gathering. Thabang’s father also guided her solo performance at school, as did Kelvin’s brother. Sonya explained, “My father was a jazz fan and I used

to listen to jazz music with him. That is when I started loving jazz." Learning, listening and performing therefore were also forms of enjoyable socialising.

Nina was exposed to various languages as a child, and she remarked in relation to her childhood musical experiences:

> We couldn't communicate [understand each other's language] […] When they [her childhood friends] sang something […] I listened to them. I would like, okay, I can hear what they are saying. The words were easy to catch. That's how I started joining the song and then play the game with them. […] Most of the musical games they were singing, it was something that I already knew because […] somewhere, somehow, they got to learn those songs in Zulu and Sotho.

Here too, song and dance were transmitted orally within communal settings. Implied too, is the practice of rote learning.

Interviews show that the social foundation of teaching-learning in community musicking is similarly utilised by students in the School of Music. Staff member Lebo noted that:

> First-year students, especially in the diploma programme,[4] have a problem when they just start with their modules. However, they pick up skills very quickly in their [vocal] group. They are strong, and they sing with confidence. Also, senior students are helpful and they explain to the other ones sitting with them [in rehearsal]. I think [their knowledge] also flows into other subjects like music theory and aural training where they pick up staff notation quickly.

Chris explained similarly that, during rehearsals of choral music in his first year of study,

> what was important was the rhythm. Once I established the rhythm, I would then try to find the pitch somewhere. I just looked at [the score], but most of the time I followed

[4] Music literacy is not a prerequisite for admission to this programme.

> the seniors, the second or third years. So, most of the time, [the conductor] put us in-between them. It would be me between two senior students. So, when I sang, [I followed them].[5]

These observations show steps taken to assist less proficient students in reading staff notation. An environment was created that encouraged peer learning, particularly by pairing first-year and senior students.

4.2.2 Rote learning

Rote learning emerged as standard TLP. Johan remarked: "It is very typical for African ensembles to learn music [aurally]. Most of the music we learned was by ear and by frequently practising." Nina explained that they "just followed the music," and Telma described learning as an "imitation type of thing."

Chris explained that, in the school choir, rote learning effected a fast learning tempo:

> We used to work very fast […] They would give a key note to the sopranos, and go 1, 2! and everyone would sing. Everyone followed the note. I had to adjust as well and learn notes as quickly as possible. They used to sing us the melodies with the melodica […] I think then we used to catch [the melody] like this [demonstrates fast with the thumb]. Our minds were, like, very fast! We didn't struggle a lot with the melody. We listened to the melody, once, twice, and we got it, and then we would just polish when it came to singing it nicely and the way they wanted us to sing it.

Nadia emphasised that by the time she started "singing with other people, it [imitation] came freely." Mpho in turn explained that her school choir was trained in parts: "You just had to repeat after the conductor." Telma similarly remarked that the conductor "played the first line on the piano and we just had to sing after that."

[5] Lit. I didn't give out my voice.

Interviewees indicated that they learned music from conductors and fellow-musicians without knowing how to read notes. They learned through imitation and repetition, and thus developed excellent musical memory. They also learnt new music at a relatively high speed. This practice was of course common to all the domains of community musicking, and was thus continually honed in circular fashion.

4.2.3 The mass media

The mass media involves various forms of electronic mass communication (see chapter 2). The use of mass media for learning purposes emerged prominently in the interviews of various participants in this study.

Kelvin explained:

> There was a [Sunday] programme on one of the local radio stations. They played choral music and classical music from 6 to 8. It was time to brush my shoes for Monday. Every Sunday I would listen to those songs. Whether I liked it or not, I would listen to those songs because everyone was listening to that in my house: my brother, my mother, dad. They always listened to the music, so I didn't know that this was happening to me: I was learning these songs. The love of it was getting into my system. When I started singing I didn't know I could produce a sound like that!

Telma explained that his family "engaged with music at home through listening to the radio, and playing cassettes before the CD and DVD era." Thabang described how, at her home in Lesotho, her father would switch to a choral programme on a specific radio station in South Africa. Listening with him instilled in her a passion for choral music to such an extent that she would borrow her father's small radio and take it to her room to find this programme for herself.

The experiences described above point to spontaneous, enjoyable engagement with the mass media, as well as the inculcation of love for specific musical genres.

Telma furthermore explained that, when he and his siblings listened to music at home, they would ask questions like:

> Mum, what does this word mean? Why do we sing it there? Something like that, that's what brought us together: listening to music and analysing music, because my dad is a jazz fan. He listens to a lot of jazz and stuff like that, so he tells us, "Oh, you know, this guy, he's been doing this, this, this, this." Something like that.

The theme of learning within family settings recurs here, but expands to include not just listening and performing, but also analysis. This implies that students enter their tertiary training with a set of embodied aesthetic norms and values, as well as the capacity to interrogate and reflect on them.

The mass media similarly is a basic teaching-learning resource in the School of Music. Chris remarked that he learns his repertoire by downloading music from Youtube, and listening to it while following scores. This particularly helped him to learn rhythm.

Staff member Ronaldo noted that most "learners do not learn from scores. They go to YouTube and listen to how Pavarotti does it." Staff member Edwin in turn explained that students "listen to the music for one or two weeks to internalise the melody. Then they start looking at the words."

So, while the internet is a product of late 20th century industrialism, it relies for its efficacy on the ageless technique of oral transmission. The electronic mass media is an extention of students' prior experience with oral teaching-learning techniques, and they rely heavily on it. For this reason staff also make use of this medium. Lebo indicated that she always advises her students to listen to YouTube. Tumi similarly encourages students to listen to YouTube recordings as much as possible. Recordings on YouTube are useful because they involve "whatever instrument students play." Ronaldo also finds YouTube useful because it exposes his jazz students to improvisation.

Handy as staff find the internet for teaching-learning, they also pointed out certain pitfalls. Tumi complained that instead of students focusing their attention on basics ("doing the simple things [like] one plus one is two"), "they are lured by recordings of skilled musicians performing technically advanced music. They then want to play music for which they are not yet ready, instead of developing gradually and learning sequentially."

Lebo in turn explained that students often prefer listening to recordings rather than "figuring out and learning the notes themselves." Learning from scores not only is a valuable learning strategy for her. She also warned that "sometimes, when students use some recording, they learn incorrectly […] Not all recordings are good or correct."

Lebo explained that, when teaching keyboard harmony, she first "records melodies [on the piano] on their own, and then with the bass part." She then sends these recordings to students by means of WhatsApp.

These observations identify some of the pitfalls of the mass media as a teaching-learning resource. They imply that unregulated use could be counterproductive, and that appropriate strategies need to be devised.

4.3 Literary transmission

Forms of music literacy that emerged in this research study are tonic sol-fa (hereafter, sol-fa) and staff notation (Figure 6):

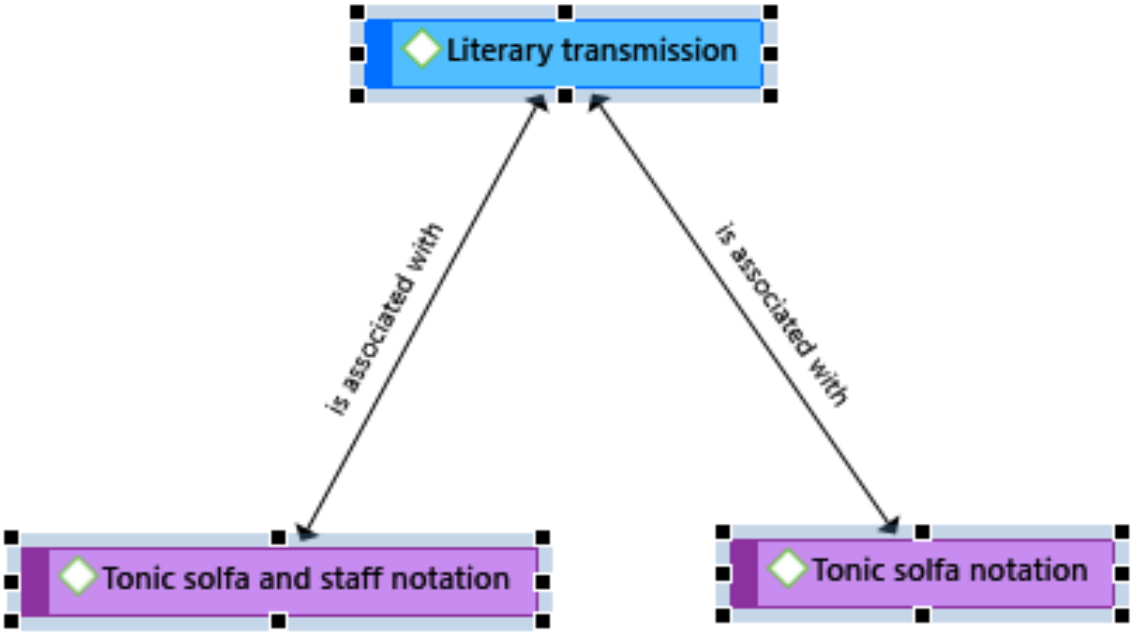


Fig. 6. Literary transmission

4.3.1 Sol-fa

Sol-fa is a ubiquitous tool for teaching-learning in all domains. Nina and Chris explained that there is no church choir that does not somehow make use of sol-fa, whether in hymn books or as general teaching-learning strategy. Nina remarked that music in staff notation would even be transcribed by conductors "so that it has sol-fa, and that is how we were taught to read the music." In certain cases where singers could not read sol-fa either, "conductors would then sing d-d-m-d and you responded."

Sol-fa learnt in church involved more than mere literacy. It shaped Telma's musical experiences:

> At church, that's where I learned how to read sol-fa. That's where I'd rather say my musical ear grew because if you play me a melody, I don't hear the melody [as pure pitch], I hear sol-fa. And then, if you ask me to sing it for you, then I ask you, "Can I sing it on sol-fa?" Then I sing it on sol-fa. That's the biggest thing I learned at church, reading sol-fa.

All participants stressed the interdependence of home, church choir, community choir and school choir regarding the use of sol-fa, in tandem with rote learning. Knowledge of sol-fa seems to spread from church to home settings, and is used by parents and siblings. Staff member Denice explained that all students "know sol-fa because that is how they have been taught choir music and even their solo repertoire, which I think is very beneficial because they don't have a piano."

Thabang described how, after church, her father called his family together to sing the hymns from a particular service. This they would do by first "practising the song in sol-fa." According to Sonya, her mother also knew sol-fa because she sang in the church choir. She in turn learnt sol-fa from her mother, and used this system to teach recorder to children at church.

As with rote learning, participants noted that learning by means of sol-fa was direct and quick. Sol-fa emerged from interviews as a technique that is vital for aural training. It transfers effectively across performance domains and levels of musical proficiency.

4.3.2 The integration of sol-fa and staff notation

Interviews show that domestic musical activity, and church and community choirs are marked most extensively by the use of sol-fa; while sol-fa and staff notation co-exist and are integrated in secondary school musical training and choirs.

Kelvin explained that, when he started singing at secondary school, he encountered “staff notation with sol-fa transcription.” He became fascinated by this, and thought, “So, this is what Western music looks like!” Nadia was also introduced to staff notation at secondary school. When her teacher showed her staff notation, she asked him:

> How do these sticks [note stems] work? I used to call them sticks! I wanted to know how they work, and he said, “Aahhhh! [smiles], they are just like scales! You go up the line and ... So, every time I sang sol-fa, I payed attention to where the pitch was, and I would also follow the sticks – the distance in-between. That was actually how I learned how to read music.

Johan similarly discovered that musical participation, in particular instrumental performance, at his secondary school required existing staff notation skills. Therefore, motivated by the need to know “another side of music, which is reading,” he enrolled for private tuition.

Such training offered self-evident advantages when students entered the School of Music. Chris noted that “in the School of Music, they just give you staff notation. They don’t ask whether you know it or you don’t!” A lecturer explained in this regard that scores of choral and operatic music used in the School of Music are in staff notation only, and that their transcription into sol-fa would be impractical.

Generally, however, interviews point out various strategies that integrate sol-fa and staff notation. Several interviewees explained that knowledge of sol-fa was an indispensable tool for reading and performing scores. Telma explained that “I still use sol-fa in everything

I do. Even the Serenaders[6] use sol-fa. We learn our music on sol-fa, so that connects with my background." Staff member Lebo explained: "So, we have in the past said, if you find it [staff notation] difficult, write the tonic sol-fa at the top but try to match what you see in tonic sol-fa with the note that you see so that you realise the correlation between the two."

The dependence on sol-fa by vocalists like Telma is not exceptional. Sol-fa is similarly indispensable to the two instrumentalists in the group, namely Thomas (a pianist) and Sonya (a recorder player). Thomas indicated: "When I came to North-West University in 2014, there was holistic music education. I learnt about sol-fa and staff notation. I got to read both of them." Thomas implies an interdependence between these two systems that Sonya made explicit: "I do my pieces in sol-fa and then letter names. I have to do sol-fa first. I have to sing it with my mind. I don't even look at timing. I check sol-fa first. I am familiar with it, it is easier than letter names."

I infer from these observations that the use of sol-fa, conventionally associated with vocal performance, is an essential strategy for these two instrumentalists. This is also an instance of the development of new knowledge (staff notation) from an established basis (sol-fa).

Chris's remark that "in the conservatory, they just give you staff notation," contradicts actual integrated sol-fa and staff notation teaching practice. Staff member Tumi explained that most of his students (lower brass players) come from church and other community bands where "they all did solfege, and yeah, I think it is foolish to ignore it. You can beat somebody, saying 'all cows eat grass,' [referring to staff notation]. But then you have to go 'doh, mi, soh, lah,' and ask: 'Can you do it in another key?'" Tumi stressed that the use of letter names should therefore not be enforced, and that sol-fa should be retained if it is effective. He discovered that his students use sol-fa when attempting to solve particular

[6] An a capella group comprising male students. The group sings in the typical *amakhwaya* (lit. choir) style of community choirs.

musical problems in scores. He accordingly uses this strategy “in improvisation class as well.”

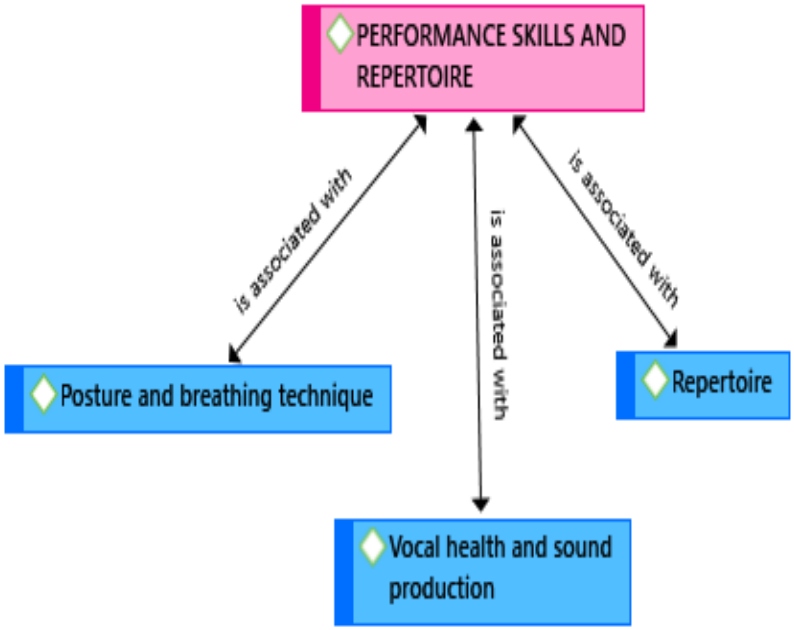
While sol-fa therefore plays a vital role in teaching-learning practices in the School of Music, there is some evidence of a gradual shift towards the predominant use of staff notation. Lebo noted: “The tonic sol-fa that they focused on during their early development, I won’t say it is a good or bad thing. I think it is good if you can do both [sol-fa and staff notation] and [integrate them].”[7] She also remarked: “Students rely quite strongly on tonic sol-fa to learn music but when they are exposed to staff notation, I don’t want to say that they forget about tonic sol-fa, but they find it more difficult to work with.”

I deduce from interviews that, while staff notation is indispensable in choir and operatic rehearsals, there is a significant degree of flexibility regarding the use of notation during individual practical lessons. Learners are allowed to use whatever method is suitable for them to learn their individual repertoire. Lebo allowed her students to sing difficult intervals with sol-fa notation, Tumi allowed his students to learn their scales using any suitable notation while Denice was not particular about a notation system for the learning of repertoires.

[7] Lit. if you can maintain an average of what you use between the two.

4.4 Performance skills and repertoire

Fig 7. Performance skills and repertoire



As mentioned, approximately half of the student population in the School of Music are vocalists, and this is reflected in my research population (two instrumentalists and eight singers). Denice explained that most students have “some kind of proficiency in singing because they sing in so many community choirs before their enrolment in the School of Music” – a practice that was confirmed during interviews. This discussion therefore focuses on vocal skills, but also includes data related to instrumental practice.

4.4.1 Posture and breathing technique

Mpho differentiated between breathing techniques cultivated in the School of Music, and those she encountered in her school choir. Her vocal coach in the School of Music taught her: “When I take a breath, I must sing *through* it. My stomach goes in and I breathe in to fill up. But, from my past experience, it was not like that.”

Talking about her experiences in her school choir, she explained that phrasing was poor because choir members were unsynchronised: “We could not always breathe at the same time.” However, she noted: “Conductors told us to breathe in, and as you breathe in, you expand here [pointing to her stomach]. They said we should keep our stomach hard. We should hold our breath so that when you are singing a phrase, your breath doesn’t run out.”

Interviewees thus explained that they arrived at the School of Music understanding the importance of breath support for singing. Mpho remarked: “When I got here it was not difficult for me to understand what was expected of me. Even the breathing, how you support.”

Telma explained how his lecturers developed his breathing:

> Breathing was there but I had to adjust a lot in my vocal classes […] I was introduced to a new way of learning in terms of your posture. I just had to focus on breathing down, to keep everything low, to support from the diaphragm [while] lining up my neck and then breathing as if I am yawning. So, those are the things I didn’t apply that much [before]. Even if I did, I didn’t realise this. But now I had to make sure that I do such things.

Staff member Denice explained:

> From their previous knowledge students don’t learn proper technical ability like how to use the voice, although they know about breathing, they know they have to stand up straight and to say the right words. Pronunciation is a big problem because we start learning Italian and German, and technical aspects related to how the voice actually works.

Staff member Tumi explained that proper breathing and correct posture is also very important for instrumentalists (in his case, lower brass). He described his teaching strategy as follows:

> We start talking a little bit, and then we start going through the routine of what I want them to do, playing whatever instrument: breathing exercises, buzzing on the mouthpiece, posture, what to do on the instrument in the last ten minutes of that lesson. I explained, “OK, this is what you need to do every day.” By the time they make their first note, whoosh!, everyone says, “What a nice sound, that sound is so good.”

Clearly, breathing exercises and cultivating a suitable posture is also a requirement for good instrumental sound, and must precede any attempt at the first note of a particular work. As in the case of vocal training, learners are required to reflect on their previous knowledge, and make adaptions to and develop their skills in collaboration with their lecturers.

4.4.2 Vocal health and sound production

The conductor of the campus choir explained to Telma that “you support your breathing, obviously, whenever you sing, but [in order to] do the correct stuff” [i.e. produce good sound and interpret correctly]. A link is thus implicitly established between vocal health and technique on the one hand, and sound production and interpretation on the other. Chris in this way learnt that good breathing technique is a prerequisite for interpretation: “You don’t let your note die. You must apply a feminine ending.” In other words, the sound should not end abruptly. Rather, the end of phrases should be supported by the diaphragm and be smooth.

Telma explained that when he joined the on-campus a capella group, the Serenaders, he imitated their sound quality. However, he came to realise that he was hurting his voice by adopting the group’s heavy vibrato and powerful delivery. Adopting the techniques learnt

from his vocal coach (“I had to adjust so that I maintained everything correctly”), he was able to develop a fuller sound, especially in the higher register, while caring for his voice.

Telma also was a member of the campus choir who did not cultivate the full, robust sound of the Serenaders. Explaining that you “can’t sing with a Serenaders voice in the campus choir,” he therefore had to make another adjustment:

> I just sang a bit light to accommodate the rest. This also helped me to develop the musical theatre style, because in musical theatre, they told me, you don’t sing with your larynx up. You still need to sing correctly, but it must still be light, it must not be too heavy.

Mpho described a similar experience, remarking how her voice changed

> because of the technique they gave us here at the School of Music. So, I can’t always rely on the things that I used to learn, because I am going to upset my teacher. She has to see that I am going forward, that I am listening and doing what she wants me to do. But I know how to adapt[8] when I am at home where I […] sing like an African. We are loud as Africans.

Like Telma, Mpho explained that she must adjust her voice quality when she sings in a community choir. She noted that “the African sound is harsh; it is produced with a full voice and so much energy.” However, in the School of Music, she had to sing lightly: “You can sing loudly but not exaggerated.”

Elaborating on Telma’s reference to the heavy vibrato cultivated in community choirs, Mpho explained:

> It was kind of confusing when I got here [to the School of Music]. The vibrato in the community choir, they like it so much, so I came here with a lot of vibrato. When I tried

[8] Lit. distinguish.

> singing with the vibrato, my voice teacher told me, “Please stop, I am going to have a headache! Singing is not about so much vibrato. Just be normal.” So I made an adjustment[9] because this vibrato thing was wasting my breath. I couldn’t sustain long, I couldn’t make a line. In the past I sang each note separately and it was perfectly fine but here in the School of Music they are very strict. They say they want a line.

Interviews thus reveal an awareness of breathing technique across all domains. However, the approach followed in the School of Music is generally more scientific, with a view towards vocal health, but also in pursuit of culture-specific sound. This sound is typically lighter than that cultivated in community choirs who value loud, resonant singing and heavy vibrato. Singers are aware of the need to protect their voice but nevertheless activate their “African voice” when performing in community choirs. They are thus able to adopt their vocal delivery and musical expression as situations demand.

4.4.3 Repertoire

Repertoire has a powerful influence on the technical development and vocal health of learners. Thabang described how, in community choirs, she sang everything that was required. She performed a “big repertoire at an early age, using the wrong technique” and damaged her voice: “When community choirs hear the potential in your voice, they want you to exploit it. You do not think about the consequences because you want the experience.” She blamed conductors for requiring an advanced repertoire from her: “They do have an idea of how to train voices but […] I think their knowledge is very much limited, even though they read.”

Mpho, in turn, values the exposure offered by community choirs, and finds teaching policy in the School of Music restrictive: “The community choir somehow makes me free, opens my voice and realises the potential of my voice. But here [in the school of Music] they are

[9] Lit I turned with it.

too careful about your voice. Because you may sometimes want to explore the potential of your voice."

Untimely exposure to a variety of styles of differing technical difficulty was a controversial issue amongst interviewees. Staff member Denice explained that such exposure could be good because it familiarises learners with a variety of "musics even when the voice is not so good." However, she complained about taking on students with damaged voices that take a long time to heal or that are beyond recovery.

Interviews have thus identified a tendency among community choirs and the competitions in which they participate, for a repertoire not suited to particular levels of voice development. The School of Music, as a professional institution, approaches vocal health and development in tandem with repertoire. These practices reveal a measure of ambivalence in that learners understand the need for suitable repertoire while also desiring the freedom to freely explore all musics.

4.5 Summary

Data from my interviews crystallises into two themes, namely musical transmission and performance skills and repertoire. Musical transmission involves orality and literacy, teaching-learning as communal activity, rote learning and the mass media. Literacy, in turn, involves tonic sol-fa and the integration of this system with staff notation. Performance skills encompass posture and breathing technique, as well as vocal health and sound production, which are shown to relate to repertoire. These themes involve the following:

- The home, church, school and community life are closely interrelated in terms of music teaching-learning as social behaviour. The agents of transmission are family members and community musicians, especially conductors. Teaching-learning in these settings are not only effective and rapid but also enjoyable. Not surprisingly, therefore, students transfer this practice to their tertiary training, and rely on each

other for teaching-learning. Senior students take on the role previously performed by parents and conductors, and assist first-year students.

- Rote learning emerges as a standard teaching-learning practice. Inculcated since initial musical participation, rote learning is described as a skill that comes “freely,” enables rapid learning and develops musical memory.

- While social teaching-learning in interrelated community settings is basic practice, the mass media has come to play an indispensable role in musical transmission. The electronic mass media is an extention of students’ prior experience with oral teaching-learning techniques.

  The radio and YouTube are the most prominent forms of transmission among interviewees. They expose them to diverse musical styles and offer information related to repertoire, performance skills and interpretation.

  Listening to recorded performances often took place in social settings, and this gave rise to discussions about musical practices, and developed analytical skills that would apparently become useful during tertiary training.

  Staff also make use of the mass media for teaching purposes, but caution that it must be utilised with care, and in tandem with established teaching practices.

- Sol-fa emerged as basic tool for teaching-learning in all domains, and shaping musical experiences. As with rote learning, learning by means of sol-fa is direct and quick.

- While some students start their study with knowledge of staff notation, most learn this system in the School of Music, integrated with sol-fa. There is a significant degree of flexibility regarding the combined use of these notation systems.

Knowledge of sol-fa emerged as indispensable for reading and performing vocal as well as instrumental scores among students as well as staff.

- Singers and instrumentalists arrive for tertiary training with knowledge of correct posture and breathing technique. Nevertheless, they have to make adjustments in collaboration with staff to hone their knowledge and optimise their performance skills.

- In contrast to considerations regarding posture and breathing, vocal health and sound production is relatively contentious. This is because vocal health and technique is interdependent with ideals regarding sound production and interpretation. Staff indicate that certain students arrive for training with voices that have been damaged by unsuitable techniques and repertoire.

  Students learn to care for their voices, but are ambiguous about the implications of the “harsh” and “loud” vocal delivery that marks community choirs because they express notions of social identity. As in the case of sol-fa, community musical values appear to induce a sense of a belonging among students who may feel alienated by the aesthetic shifts they are required to make in their tertiary training.

- Repertoire also emerges as a rather contentious issue because it impacts on singers’ technical development and vocal health. A tendency was identified among community choirs and competitions in which they participate to attempt repertoire not suited to particular levels of voice development. The School of Music approaches vocal health and development in tandem with repertoire. These practices reveal a measure of ambivalence, in that learners understand the need for suitable repertoire while desiring the freedom to freely explore all musics.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of data

This discussion expands the interpretation of the data described in the preceding chapter by means of the tenets of CoP, adapted from Wenger (1998:5). These principles are learning as doing (practice) (5.1), learning as belonging (community) and becoming (identity) (5.2), and learning as meaning (experience) (5.3).

5.1 Learning as doing (practice)

5.1.1 Transmission

Participatory aural transmission was identified as fundamental domestic musical practice, with parents and siblings emerging as teaching agents. Thabang explained that her father gathered his children on a Sunday to sing hymns they performed in church earlier that day. Nina similarly described participating in musical games, where she acquired songs in different local languages through listening and rote learning.

Participatory aural transmission similarly emerged as a learning strategy in the School of Music. A vocal lecturer pointed out that she noticed that students learned from one another during choir rehearsals. This was confirmed by Chris, who described how new students imitated senior students. The outcome of this was a teaching practice that paired students with differing capacity during rehearsals.

Learning by rote was general teaching-learning practice in high school choirs and other community music ensembles. Interviewees described how they imitated their conductors and fellow choristers. They also indicated that rote learning involved frequent practising, while enabling rapid musical transmission.

The use of mass media as a learning tool similarly emerged as basic practice in community institutions as well as the School of Music. Singing along with radios and record players at home was common, while some students also engaged in musical

analysis in collaboration with their parents. This helped to pave the way for musical analysis in the School of Music, which involves aurality that incorporates body movement.

All student participants noted that they learn their repertoire from YouTube and other mass media platforms. Lecturers are aware of this strategy and consequently apply it for teaching purposes, although not without reservations. They noted that not all recordings are suitable for learning, and that their unregulated use should be avoided. Such differing experiences and views are not necessarily undesirable, as they may constitute the basis for experimentation and development within a CoP.

The practice of learning through literate transmission is common to all musical institutions involved in this investigation. The application of sol-fa notation in vocal music was identified as a fundamental though not exclusive strategy. Recorder player Sonya explained that she learnt sol-fa from her mother's singing, and that this system remains crucial for transmission and even expressive purposes.

Other participants observed that they used sol-fa to learn hymns in church choirs. When musical scores did not contain sol-fa, conductors often transcribed them into this notational form. An interviewee described how choristers would first sing melodies on sol-fa, followed by the lyrics. This promoted musical memorisation.

Musical transmission by means of staff notation, especially in ensembles at the School of Music, is long-standing teaching-learning practice. Nevertheless, lecturers are aware of the importance of sol-fa to students and they consequently encourage the combined use of staff notation and sol-fa. A voice lecturer thus explained that she uses sol-fa to teach difficult intervals. However, she added that, when students get used to staff notation, they tend to prefer it to sol-fa notation. Brass lecturer Tumi likewise remarked that the medium of musical interaction during lessons is sol-fa. He often sings difficult passages in sol-fa, and uses it to explain concepts during ensemble rehearsals.

The preceding discussion points to cultural brokering involving staff notation and sol-fa. Culture brokerage facilitates sustainable cross-cultural understanding and dialogue (Brashier, 2016; Michie, 2014:88). Staff notation is a core mode of transmission at choir and ensemble rehearsals in the School of Music, but sol-fa is accommodated by lecturers when it promotes learning. Students, on the other hand, rely significantly on their pre-existing aural skills. They are simultaneously acquiring (and understanding the usefulness of) staff notation, and have developed a learning practice that integrates these systems.

5.1.2 Performance skills, aesthetics and repertoire

Data from interviews point to an awareness across all domains of breathing techniques. However, pedagogies applied by various conductors show some differences (as described below). Approaches followed in community institutions may be described as technical; in other words, experience leads to practical knowledge that is applied in vocal sound production. The approach in the School of Music is similar, but is based on thorough understanding of the physiology of sound production, involving vocal chords, posture and breathing support.

Students come to understand over time that their previously acquired knowledge is fundamental, but that it requires expansion. “Keeping the stomach hard” and other representations of vocal technique therefore benefit from a scientific approach. According to Latukefu and Verenikina (2010:183) and Vygotskiĭv (2012:194), this approach can be described as knowledge acquired consciously according to a certain system of formal instruction. The scientific approach is generally abstracted from concrete experience, hence it is easily transferable from one context to another. As students explained, they became more conscious of the application of effective singing technique in different choir settings and this helped them to maintain a good vocal health.

Data from interviews also reveal divergent vocal aesthetics. The general aesthetic in community singing is a preference for “heavy” vibrato, “harsh” tone quality as well as energetic, loud sound production. The vocal aesthetic in the School of Music involves a

lighter vibrato and a smooth, connected melodic line. More research is required to understand how these aesthetics shape each other. However, preliminary results show that students do not summarily reject the “traditional” vocal aesthetic. Instead, they utilise both aesthetics, depending on performance setting. Put differently, these aesthetics define and may even mediate between particular performance practices and identities.

Finally, data shows a connection between voice health and repertoire. Student participants expressed an awareness that advanced works (often prescribed for competitions) performed by community choirs may negatively affect voice health and development. This is because some of the repertoire choices by community choirs often do not take into consideration different levels of singing proficiency. Secondly, most community choir conductors do not have enough technical knowledge about vocal techniques. Repertoire selection at the School of Music, in contrast, follows a pattern of sequential developmental that accounts for vocal maturity and health. Control of breathing support and posture plays a particularly significant role in this process.

5.2 Learning as belonging (community) and becoming (identity)

Musical identity involves a sense of belonging effected by means of group membership (Kenny, 2016:23). Preceding discussions in this chapter show that the formation of social identity is strategic and ongoing (Wenger, 1998:164-165). CoPs have unique qualities developed by members whose identity may in turn be reconstructed by emerging communal values and norms. In essence, movement from one identity form to another does not involve loss but negotiated adaptation.

Interviews accordingly reveal a continuum of relationships, flanked by egalitarianism and hierarchy (Sather, 1996:71-83). Generally speaking, relationships at home, and in church and community performance groups, tend towards the former, while those at high schools and the School of Music exhibit a more hierarchical nature.

While parents often played the role of musical expert in domestic settings, musical transmission was a social activity involving face to face relationships and rote learning among family members. There was a strong sense of trust in the family, which offered children a sense of belonging while developing their interest in musical performance.

Because of their more formal nature, church and community choirs involve some degree of hierarchy. Conductors may therefore control repertoire selection, while roles and responsibilities are generally shared, enabling these choirs to maintain a nurturing quality. Distinctions between novice and expert are mediated by the fact that members usually are amateurs, and conductors often rise from the ranks where they gain experience and may undergo lengthy apprenticeship. In addition, the parent-child relationship in domestic settings is reproduced in the nurturing relationship between older and younger choir members. A sense of community may furthermore be promoted in choirs that perform well at particular events.

The relationship between conductors, administrators and vocalists in school choirs is largely an expression of the traditional, hierarchical teacher-learner relationship. Here the teacher is often also the conductor who is responsible for discipline, teaching and repertoire selection. In similar vein, this relationship defines the choir of the School of Music. However, the conductor aims at creating an interactive teaching-learning environment marked by participatory learning. This practice also characterises music education modules, in particular those involving instrumental instruction (such as on guitar, drums and recorder). More experienced participants are co-responsible for teaching singers and instrumentalists with limited technical and notational skills. This promotes a sense of belonging among newcomers, and boosts the self-confidence of students in teaching roles.

Data also shows that individual practical tuition involved intimate relationships between students and lecturers. A student explained that her voice lecturer needed “to see that I am going forward, that I am listening and doing what she wants me to do.” Another interviewee remarked that she “somehow became a child” cared for and comforted by her

vocal coach who was like a mother to her. This student eventually graduated at the top of her class, and went on to join an opera company.

5.3 Learning as meaning (experience)

According to Wenger (1998:52), “practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life.” People are therefore concerned with meaning in whatever they do, whether it be talking, acting, singing or dancing (Wenger, 1998:53). Meaning involves the ongoing negotiation between two processes, namely participation and reification. Student CoP thus takes form as the negotiated adoption of particular modes of transmission as well as musical practices.

Previous discussion of the mass media as a mode of transmission identified their diverse meanings to students and staff. Staff members explained that students sometimes utilise recordings that may not be suitable for a particular purpose. So, for example, the notion of sequential learning may not materialise when students are lured by skilled musicians performing technically advanced music, and thus stumble over material for which they are not ready. The meaning students consequently take from this encounter with staff involves the reification of methodical approaches to learning, involving stepwise advancement in technique and repertoire.

The learning of effective breathing technique involves similar reification. One vocalist had to reconsider maintaining a tense stomach wall in favour of “singing through” a breath and allowing the stomach to expand when filling up again. She thus had to negotiate the meaning of her prior experience in order to adopt a more effective technique. Generally, vocalists have learnt that good sound production requires a straight neck as well as breath support from the diaphragm. An interviewee remarked that reification had made him constantly aware of the need for appropriate technique. Students thus are required to reflect on their previous knowledge in their training, make adjustments and develop according to methods recommended by lecturers.

Data on vocal aesthetics reveal that lecturers had brokered the different meanings students attach to vibrato and tone colour. Several participants indicated that they had developed the capacity to adapt to the aesthetics demanded in community choirs as well as the choir of the School of Music.

Such reflective adaptation also marked the use of notation. As explained in chapter four, student participants were required to learn repertoire by means of staff notation. However, most of them integrated this notational form with sol-fa and the rote method, in collaboration with staff and more experienced students. By writing sol-fa notation on top of staff notation, an effective learning method was developed. The negotiation of meaning thus involves personal reflection on prior knowledge, followed by adaptation and reification in collaboration with other members of the CoP.

CHAPTER 6: Summary and conclusion

Chapter six offers a summary of findings and explains the need for further research.

This investigation set out to provide answers to two essential questions, namely 1) what are the teaching-learning practices and experiences of selected students and staff in the NWU School of Music? and 2) what are the implications of these practices and experiences for teaching-learning in the school?

Chapter one discusses the research problem. I explain my gradual awareness of the varied articulation by students in the diploma and BA programmes of musical experiences at home, church and school as well as the mass media. My consequent premise was that students' engagement with teaching-learning practices in the School of Music is inseparable from their extracurricular musical experiences. This premise related to literature identifying the ongoing redefinition of teaching-learning practices within particular socio-historical environments.

Chapter two viewed teaching-learning practices in the School of Music in terms of the colonial past, and the ongoing national commitment towards effective teaching-learning practice with a view towards meaningful social transformation.

The findings of this investigation are discussed in chapter four and five. They correlate with literature on teaching-learning practices within social settings. While this principle is understood well in relation to community musics, it is not routinely applied to uncover the link between teaching-learning practices spanning community and institutional teaching-learning.

Invoking the theory of CoP, I accordingly attempted to look beyond conventional teacher-centered, hierarchical teaching-learning practices to actual practices involving boundary-transcending, collective learning that mediates the outlooks, needs and skills of all participants.

The research method and design I employed to pursue these considerations is that of an instrumental case study involving interviews with ten students and five staff members. Conducting, transcribing and codifying these interviews took place over a period of two years. Two themes emerged from this, namely processes of transmission, and the interrelated acquisition of performance skills and repertoire.

Musical transmission involves continual negotiation between aurality and literacy. Aurality remains the mainstay of most community musical performance, particularly choral singing by means of which virtually all student participants became musically enculturated. Aural transmission is described as fast and effective, and able to develop a capacity to memorise large amounts of musical data.

The aural transmission of skills and knowledge also is practice in the School of Music. So, for example, the audition for admission to the diploma programme assesses skills by aural means. Furthermore, music listening is a fundamental activity in modules such as musicology, music education, aural training, instrumental pedagogy and performance.

Two fundamental, interrelated qualities of aurality in music have been transferred to teaching-learning in the School of Music. They take form as rote learning among peers. Interviewees have explained how new students receive spontaneous tuition and demonstration from senior students, especially in ensemble settings. This emerges as a site of brokering or negotiation, since the choir conductor consciously adopted a strategy of pairing students with varying skill and knowledge during rehearsals. This correlates with the ancient practice of musical apprenticeship in Africa, as well as with interactive teaching-learning in community settings. It also critically refocuses our attention on conventional boundaries separating ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ teaching-learning practices.

The mass media is another site of negotiation. It emerged as a particularly popular mode of aural transmission spanning all performance domains. Students and staff utilised sites like YouTube to learn repertoire and teach effectively. Staff thus recognised its usefulness

but argued that its indiscreet use could be counterproductive. However, they had become more conscious of the efficacy of the mass media, and the need for its controlled application in teaching-learning activities.

While aural transmission is a commonly shared, existing skill among students, the same uniformity does not apply to literacy. Prior to enrolment at university, only a smaller number of student participants had acquired some proficiency with staff notation. Most were exposed to sol-fa notation, and arrive with varying skills in relation to its use.

The individual, targeted use of sol-fa and staff notation, and their integration, is another important domain of negotiation in the school. The historical embeddedness of sol-fa (discussed in chapter two) is such that it remains a conventional means of musical transmission. This even applies to certain instrumentalists who learnt their music by first singing melodies in sol-fa, followed by their instrumental reproduction.

Almost all student participants learnt their repertoire by means of sol-fa notation they encountered in community musical activity. Staff, on the other hand, noted that sol-fa transmission has limitations. They pointed out that students need to master staff notation as most sheet music take this form. However, they incorporated both staff and sol-fa notation in practical as well as theory lessons.

The final site of negotiation to emerge from this study involves performance techniques, repertoire and aesthetics. Student participants possessed prior skills and knowledge related to technique, but articulated emerging awareness of a more scientific approach to vocal sound production as well as voice health, which relates to suitable repertoire.

The negotiation of vocal aesthetics is considerably more complex because of its entanglement with notions of identity. Divergent aesthetics involving vibrato and tone colour is at the center of this matter. As explained, students arrive at the School of Music with a tone quality inculcated in much contemporary community musicking, which in turn is a legacy of older African musical practices. However, most vocal music performed in

the school is in the classical Western style. Student participants expressed reluctance to relinquish their ‘African’ voice because it expresses a sense of community that speaks of home, church and community.

Student self-construction in fact took on multiple, situational form, and they selected aesthetics that suited particular cultural settings. Their exposure to different vocal aesthetics aided their vocal development. It further enabled them to adapt their voice to the repertoires of a diverse musical environment. It also helped them to adapt their voices to the style of different choirs.

6.1 Further research

A number of specific implications for teaching-learning in the School of Music arises from my investigation. They suggest a need for further research into the following negotiated practices identified in my study:

1. The value and interdependence of modes aural and literate transmission are recognised. However, given their own training, staff may be less at home with aural than literate methods. The codification of these methods of transmission, and their integration into existing teaching-practices, requires deeper understanding.

2. The co-existence of staff and sol-fa notation similarly demands a detailed investigation into their optimal use.

3. The technique of collaborative learning as evidenced among members of the school choir could serve as the foundation of an investigation into the application of this method in other performance spaces as well as theoretical modules.

4. Given the increasing yet seemingly unregulated use of mass media platforms, a clear need has developed for extensive research into their effective use.

5. Gaining a better understanding of the relationship between, and statuses of differing musical aesthetics, and the notions of dignity and belonging they invoke, is required to ensure that the School of Music remains an effective, socially relevant training institution.

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Addendum A

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

P/Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa, 2520

Tel: 018-299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Dear _____

Consent to participate in research

This form requires your consent to participate in an investigation into the music teaching-learning experiences of selected students in the School of Music at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) for the purposes of my MMus dissertation. My supervisors are Prof. J. Kruger and Mrs. J. van der Merwe.

I will be collecting data by interviewing you individually. The interviews will be captured in audio format on cell phone.

You will remain anonymous. I undertake to respect your privacy, dignity and personal views at all times, as well as your right to provide information voluntarily.

Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, the School of Music or North-West University.

At your request, I will provide you with a copy of my research proposal as well as my final draft report. You will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely
Emeka Nzelu

I consent to participate in the study in accordance with the stipulations stated above.

Signed on this ..... day of ..... at Potchefstroom

Signature of participant: _____

Addendum B

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

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South Africa 2520
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School of Music
Tel: (0)18 299 1692
Email: stenaco2003@yahoo.com

Dr. Y-M. Brand
Acting Director: School of Music
North-West University
Potchefstroom Campus

Dear Dr. Brand

Permission to conduct research in the School of Music

I hereby request your permission to conduct research among students in the School of Music for my master's programme in musicology under the supervision of Prof. J. Kruger and Mrs. J. van der Merwe.

I propose to select approximately ten students currently enrolled in the diploma and BA programmes. I intend interviewing them on their teaching-learning practices. They will have access to the processed data, and will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. They will remain anonymous.

My investigation will also involve a discussion of institutional teaching-learning practices. In this regard I undertake to keep the identity of staff anonymous and respect the integrity of the School of Music.

Yours faithfully

[Signed on 18 February 2017]
T. E. Nzelu
23093293

[Signed on 18 February 2017]
Dr. Y-M. Brand
Acting Director

Addendum C

Themes: Student interviews

Section 1: Basic biographical information

1. Birth and family history
2. Worldview and culture
3. Education

Section 2: Musical experiences

1. First and subsequent involvement in music
2. The value of music in relation to home, church, school and other community musical institutions

Section 3: Music teaching-learning practices and experiences

1. Description of prior practices and experiences
2. Description of practices and experiences in the School of Music

Themes: Staff interviews

1. The integration of students' prior skills, knowledge and aesthetics in teaching-learning practices in the school
2. The value and use of aural transmission
3. The value and use of tonic sol-fa and staff notation
4. Selection of repertoire
5. Vocal sound production and health
6. Collaborative learning