

# Towards Decolonising the Approaches of Teaching and learning Indigenous African Music at a South African university: Insights from Pre-service Music Teachers

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**Abstract:** The teaching of Indigenous African Music (IAM) in institutions of higher learning has received considerable attention due to the need to decolonise the curriculum. It is crucial to cultivate future educators who have a profound understanding of IAM and are capable of actively participating in the teaching and learning of African music within educational institutions. This inquiry aims to reveal the impact of the approaches used in the teaching and learning of IAM at universities in South Africa from the perspective of pre-service music teachers. The study is underpinned by Paulo Freire's praxial theory. Data were collected from twelve participants within an interpretive paradigm integrated into a qualitative methodology. The ethnographic study design was used due to its capacity to capture the lived experiences of the participants and to comprehend the meanings they attribute to their participation in IAM lessons. Thematic analysis of journal entries and semi-structured interviews was employed to generate the data. The results unveiled the advantages of utilising a wide range of models, delivery methods, and approaches such as Ubuntu pedagogy, discussion groups and dialogue, the instructor's approach, peer coaching, and the development of positive attitudes towards

the teaching and learning of IAM in higher education. It is recommended that pedagogical strategies that foster positive attitudes and elevate IAM in music teacher preparation programmes be implemented in institutions of higher learning through the use of the approaches that emerged in this study, in an effort to remove barriers related to the marginalisation and discrimination of the subject.

**Keywords:** Indigenous African Music, decolonising, Ubuntu pedagogy, masifundisane, community music experts.

## 1. Introduction

The erasure of indigenous knowledge systems during the colonial and apartheid era has proven to be the most precarious socio-political tool used to delay and deny South Africans opportunities for economic development, advancement, and emancipation through the education system (Haringsma, 2021). Indigenous knowledge systems are defined by Buthelezi (2021) as a socially constructed, complex body of information and technologies that have been created and exist in relation to particular circumstances and local indigenous communities. Indigenous African Music (IAM) is part of indigenous knowledge systems that was not offered in schools during the colonial era; hence, teachers adopted the dominant framework of Western imperialism in South Africa (Buthelezi, 2021). Due to the rapid economic and social changes in Africa following the introduction of education by missionaries and colonial masters, as well as the fact that many children now live in large cities and towns, teachers are often ignorant of the traditional music of their own people and believe it to be demonic (Mensah & Acquah, 2021).

In the global context, all United Nations agencies are striving to encourage models of sustainable human development that enhance the knowledge assets present within communities (Gibert & Lennox, 2019). The promotion and protection of African indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa is an essential step towards development, empowerment, and equity. Respecting and valuing

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the wisdom and customs of indigenous people is one of the most important ways to address the long-lasting effects of colonialism and apartheid. This entails the teaching of Indigenous African Music (IAM), which serves as a medium for the transmission of African cultural values and a central carrier of heritage in African culture (Carver, 2020). It is essential to acknowledge traditional knowledge through partnerships, research, and educational initiatives, among other methods. Additionally, it is necessary to promote the development of a more just and inclusive society that respects the rich cultural legacy of indigenous peoples, as music is deeply rooted in African culture and serves a vital purpose. Furthermore, Buthelezi (2021) affirms that African music is a complete art form that is intimately related to dramatization, gesture, and dance. Songs serve several purposes in religious rites and rituals, such as imparting teachings and advice, narrating tales, commemorating life and death milestones, offering political direction, or expressing dissatisfaction (Evans, 2017).

### **1.1 Problem statement**

It is now mandated by post-1994 curriculum reforms in South Africa that indigenous African music be given more prominence in schools and colleges (Department of Education, 2011). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasises the value of indigenous knowledge systems, recognising the country's rich history and legacy. However, implementing these curriculum changes has proven to be challenging in practice. One of the major challenges is teacher training, which is critical for achieving the intended results efficiently and successfully (Buthelezi, 2021; McConnachie, 2016). In recent years, there has been a growing desire for a decolonised curriculum in South African colleges. Govender and Naidoo (2023) contend that decolonisation entails the recognition and repudiation of ideologies, standards, customs, and viewpoints imposed by historical colonisers. However, there is little consensus over the definition of a decolonised curriculum, particularly among the majority of music departments, which, with the endorsement of university administration, sustain a curriculum largely influenced by American jazz and Euro-American art music (Watkins, Madiba & McConnachie, 2021). Govender and Naidoo (2023) assert that the persistent stalling of the curricular decolonisation initiative is mainly due to implementation challenges at the institutional level rather than conceptual and theoretical deficiencies. Acknowledging these concerns, the decolonisation of how music curricula are taught has become essential to transforming classroom relationships from authoritarian, hierarchical, and exclusionary forms of teaching and learning to open and dynamic forms of interaction (Icaza & Vázquez, 2018).

### **1.2 Research questions**

Given this, the study aims to serve as an insider's guide to reviving IAM instruction, contributing to the body of knowledge and providing insights through the following research questions:

- What factors encourage pre-service music teachers to participate in IAM teaching and learning at the university?
- To what extent did pre-service music teachers' skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes towards IAM develop during their participation in the project?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Western prejudices and misconceptions about IAM**

This section reviews literature related to Western prejudices and misconceptions about Indigenous African Music (IAM), including works based on teachers' experiences and suggestions for teaching African music in schools and universities. Ngubane and Makua (2021) contend that the persistence of colonial methodologies has socialised African students, resulting in a loss of their values and identity, as well as their indigenous beliefs and knowledge systems. The majority of African pupils in classrooms are not culturally attracted to pedagogical practices in Africa—South Africa in particular—because these practices are deeply entrenched in Western philosophies and worldviews.

The notion that everything about African culture, including traditional music, is devilish was revealed by teachers involved in a study examining the nature of music and dance instruction in a Ghanaian school (Mensah & Acquah, 2021). Additionally, teachers expressed minimal knowledge of the IAM subject matter and suggested that resource persons should be brought from the community into schools for Ghanaian children. Consistent with the findings of the study, Mensah and Acquah (2021) also recommended that African traditional music teachers undergo orientation to dispel any prejudices and misconceptions they may have acquired as a result of their Western training and the legacy of colonial education. The study was motivated by the author's observation during entrance auditions that some students perceived IAM as inferior, unappealing, and associated with the illiterate.

## **2.2 Suggested essential IAM techniques and approaches**

In Turkey, a study was conducted by Ahmethan and Yigit (2017) to retrieve preservice music teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching and learning processes. Similarly, a study conducted by Ganyata (2020) in Zimbabwe explored primary teachers' opinions on their teaching of IAM suggesting a plethora of teaching methods and approaches, which include observation, experiential learning, peer education, and the use of elders in the community. Furthermore, the teachers suggested incorporating IAM terminology and associated teaching methods that are firmly rooted in African culture to address the impact of colonialism on IAM education.

Ngubane and Makua (2021) conducted a study at a South African institution of higher learning to investigate the possibility of transforming educational practices in diverse South African classrooms and fostering the restoration and cultivation of African indigenous values and cultures through the principles of Ubuntu philosophy. Similarly, a study exploring the approaches to teaching IAM instruments revealed the usefulness of developing the IAM learning community and co-producing knowledge with community experts (Ngoma & Fikelepi-Twani, 2024).

Based on the findings of these studies, the author contends that for educators and lecturers to decolonise the teaching and learning of IAM, they must first comprehend the values, beliefs, and perspectives of aspiring music teachers. The author argues that existing research on students' insights, which provides a detailed description of their experiences and the extent of interfacing methods of teaching IAM in universities, is limited. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study outlines the extent of interfacing methods of teaching IAM at a South African university from the perspective of preservice music teachers.

## **2.3 Theoretical framework**

In this paper, the author deployed Praxial Learning Theory, which emphasises the importance of critically reflecting on practice to explore pre-service music teachers' reflections on their experiences of lessons on IAM at a higher institution of learning (Freire, 2017). As defined by Freire's (2017) educational liberating theory of praxial philosophy, the ideology that teaching and learning (praxis) is a dynamic interaction between "action and reflection" is articulated. In this method, a teachable moment is transformed into a learning opportunity for both the instructor and the learner, who can then engage in critical reflection on subsequent actions. Similarly, Rugut and Osman (2013) posit that praxial learning is an inventive way of life that encourages free, creative reflection and thoughtful action to change the world, even as the learners are transformed in the process. The study enabled pre-service teachers to reflect on their pedagogical experiences by providing opportunities for educational issues to be discussed and thoroughly examined using the Praxial Learning Theory (Arnold & Mundy, 2020).

As stated by Freire (2017), problems can be solved or at least mitigated when teachers and students work together to discuss and analyse issues, reflecting on the results of past actions. It is imperative for pre-service music lecturers to possess the capacity to critically evaluate pedagogies in action. As

a result, critical praxis always entails delving into theoretical frameworks and pedagogical experiences to assess current practices. To address the challenges encountered by global learning communities, the author argues that studying the effects of models to substantiate best practices for university educators and pre-service music teachers is important. Consequently, the author was able to investigate pedagogical strategies that can transform classrooms into institutions that elevate the status of IAM, a historically marginalised subject, by drawing on Freire's (2017) concept of liberating praxis learning theory.

### **3. Methodology**

This paper utilised an interpretative paradigm rooted in qualitative methodology. The primary technique employed was an ethnographic design, which focused on studying a specific phenomenon or experience (Jansen & Warren, 2023). The study adopted an ethnographic research approach to provide a detailed and comprehensive account of a social setting as experienced by the participants (Delve, 2022). As noted by Silverman (2018), ethnography is regarded as a suitable research design primarily due to its effectiveness in addressing the research questions. The heightened importance placed on the accounts of participants' viewpoints and understanding fosters introspection guided by the research inquiries to ascertain suitable and effective models, approaches, strategies, and techniques for transmitting IAM, predominantly practised within the community, to higher education institutions (Hammersley, 2018).

The sample for this research consisted of twelve participants who were purposefully selected; all were pre-service music teachers. The majority of participants were fluent in Xhosa and Zulu. The research participants encompassed diverse ethnic, social, and musical backgrounds, making it imperative for community experts to contribute their expertise and provide insights about IAM. Individuals who exhibited distinct attributes, including curiosity, expertise, and familiarity with the phenomenon being studied, were chosen from various cultural backgrounds. The study was carried out at the Walter Sisulu University site located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

In this inquiry, semi-structured interviews and participant observation were selected as methods that would provide opportunities to elicit the perspectives of the students enrolled at WSU. Furthermore, to obtain rich data, journal entries and semi-structured interviews were used to explore the phenomenon under investigation more deeply, yielding valuable insights (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). With the participants' consent, audio and video recordings of the six-month-long observations and interviews were made. Ethnographic research projects require considerable time for fieldwork, but they can be adjusted to course schedules, the research topic, and funding opportunities. The six-month data collection period was sufficient as it enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive data, gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena, and achieve the study's goals.

As part of the data collection process, participants were asked to write reflections in their journals about their experiences, feelings, successes, thoughts, and insights regarding IAM in the context of the research project. This practice of record-keeping is supported by Dunlap (2006:2), who stated: "The use of reflective journals provides an opportunity for instructors to hear the voice of student teachers through the chance given to them to express the thoughts and changes they experience as a part of their learning experience." The study provided an opportunity for participants to voice their pedagogical experiences and challenges, express their opinions, and make suggestions about the teaching and learning of IAM at the university.

To establish the reliability and validity of this study, the researcher utilised data triangulation. As defined by Noble & Heale, triangulation "entails the utilisation of multiple data sources in an inquiry with the aim of generating comprehension" (2019:91). The researcher deemed it appropriate to employ source triangulation, even though certain inquiries might necessitate analysis or method triangulation.

### 3.1 Ethical considerations and trustworthiness

As with any other research project, the author sought ethical clearance from the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (reference number TWA041SNG001). The researcher applied for permission from Walter Sisulu University. After acquiring these authorisations, consent forms were distributed to the selected participants for review and, if they agreed to the terms, their signature, provided they did so voluntarily. The author stipulated that participants could opt out of the study if it caused them discomfort and that they should be given the opportunity to ask questions about anything related to their participation. Pseudonyms were used for the sampled university participants to conceal their identities. The twelve WSU participants are named using letters of the alphabet as follows: X, L, K, H, E, C, F, D, B, J, Y and W.

## 4. Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

The data was analysed using thematic analysis, following the steps of familiarisation, categorising into themes, inducing themes, and assessing themes prior to the write-up process, as recommended by Caulfield (2023). The following themes were identified from the qualitative data and are presented below under the umbrella topics: Motivation, discussion groups, and dialogue as determinants of IAM education; commitment, competitive spirit, and regular attendance at practice sessions; the instructor's approach, peer coaching, and the use of technological devices; and the development of values and positive attitudes towards IAM.

### 4.1 Determinants of IAM education

#### 4.1.1 Motivation, discussion groups and dialogue

One of the major findings of this study indicated that motivation, discussion groups, and dialogue can assist pre-service teachers in learning IAM. The findings revealed that certain intrinsic factors motivated pre-service teachers to learn IAM at university.

One participant explained how intrinsic motivation propelled her to learn the indigenous dance of amaXhosa, referred to as *umxhentso*. In a journal, Participant L reflected on his self-motivation:

*"When I joined some members did not believe that I can perform, that demotivated me, but I motivated myself. I was bad in ukusina (indigenous dance of amaZulu). In my home village, people used to laugh at me when I dance. When I saw other students dancing at university, I became interested and joined umxhentso ensemble. I expected other students to laugh at me, but they didn't, then I got courage to carry on and learned from other students. It became difficult at first, when students had conflicting ideas. However, I convinced myself to continue learning and ultimately, I acquired knowledge and dancing skills to a certain extent."* (Participant L - personal communication, February 17, 2022).

The journal entries below reveal the interests that motivated pre-service music teachers to join the ensemble. Their love for music, interest in learning aspects of IAM, and desire to know and perform the music were cited.

*"I wanted to learn the cultural dances because I didn't know the difference between ethnic cultural dances. At my home village, we don't regard umxhentso as important."* (Participant X, personal communication, February 21, 2022).

Participant F elaborated:

*"At the beginning, it was difficult, but I trusted myself and I wanted to achieve. I was not passionate about IAM, but I developed passion about it now, even ... got motivated to learn ukusina through me."*

The word *ukusina* refers to a Zulu type of dance that involves lifting and stamping the feet. In the absence of any extrinsic rewards and when conducted solely for the delight it provides, behaviour is considered intrinsically motivating. Omodan & Abejide (2022) states that, in contrast, extrinsic motivation is characterised by behaviour motivated by external rewards, including money, fame, grades, and accolades. In addition to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivators such as praise, affirmation, and awards for exemplary conduct help sustain learners' interest.

Throughout the learning process, participants continued to encourage each other while teasing one another, which added to the evident fun and enjoyment. In the long term, students are more likely to remain engaged with tasks or subjects when they are intrinsically motivated, as they derive personal gratification from the process (Omodan, 2022a).

Several journal entries provided insights into the beneficial effects of dialogue and discussion. Certain comments suggested that the participants held divergent opinions. Participants frequently engaged in disputes but ultimately reached resolutions. A number of journal reflections highlighted the positive effects of discussions and dialogue. Some comments revealed differing views, leading to arguments, but ultimately resolving the issues. Their reflections indicated that dialogue and discussions afforded participants the opportunity to express their viewpoints on various matters and gain knowledge from one another.

One pre-service music teacher, Participant H offered a striking comment:

*"Siyaxoxa yonke imihla phambi kokuba siqale ipractice naxa sigqiba silungise impazamo zethu, sicebisane nokuba fanele si improve kuphi."* (We discuss every day before starting practice and after the session, we reflect and fix our mistakes).

The following reflections revealed the benefits of discussions.

*"Several times, we disagree with each other about ideas, we have open discussions, everyone is given a chance to express views, we voice out our opinions about how to rehearse."* (Participant C).

Participant L shared her experience by saying:

*"In this group we sit down and appoint all problems, we brainstorm strategies to solve the issue."*

This notion of dialogue is not simply about communicating with another person; rather, the foundation of dialogue involves love, humility, hope, and faith to develop a "horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence" (Freire, 2013, p. 159). Consequently, teachers must shift from traditional monopolising lectures to more supportive and directed dialogues and varied learning activities. Dialogic education encourages students' critical thinking by developing their capacity to examine and evaluate information. It requires an open-minded, truth-seeking approach in which students communicate ideas and views while using active listening skills to assess opposing perspectives.

*"Oku kuxoxa kuphikiswana, kuyasinceda ukuba sikwazi ukumamela kakuhle, kwaye sikwazi nokuthola izimvo ezahlukeneyo kulo mxhentso."* Participant H. pers, comm. 23 November 2021 (IsiXhosa = The discussions help us to listen carefully and get different views in *umxhentso*).

It emerged that as participants interacted and reflected, new ideas and personalities emerged, conflicts arose; however, after some thinking and doing (praxis), participants resolved their differences, faced their challenges, and even experienced some joyous moments (Freire, 2017).

Participant F mentioned the development of friendly relationships through group discussions.

*"As time passed, I reconciled with myself because the individuals are, to some extent, welcoming, I even formed friendships in that group."*

It became evident that interaction with one another might have resulted in learning to socialise and develop interpersonal skills. Omodan (2019), Omodan (2022b) and Letseka (2000) describe Ubuntu as an interactive ethic in which our humanity is shaped by our co-dependent interactions with others. Letseka (2020) further argues that Ubuntu perspectives provide all learners, irrespective of their cultural, linguistic, social class, religion, and sexual orientation, with equal opportunities to develop and exercise their full capacities. Findings revealed that the Ubuntu pedagogy ensures that learners work together and help one another to learn and understand the learning material, in contrast to the Western education system, which promotes individualistic learning where weak learners remain weak and strong learners continue to achieve and excel (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). In the context of this research, the term Masifundisane is used to refer to a teaching and learning approach that collectively engages people from different cultures and backgrounds, such as students, community music experts, and lecturers, in co-learning with and from one another (Ngoma & Fikelepi-Twani, 2024).

#### **4.1.2 Commitment, competitive spirit and regular attendance of practice sessions**

Some participants mentioned several factors and strategies that facilitated the teaching and learning of IAM, including commitment, competitive spirit, and regular attendance in lessons. Several participants emphasised that learning was motivated by consistent practice and a sense of competition among peers. They noted that learning takes a shorter duration when one is committed and practices regularly (W, B, and Y journal entry, April 24, 2022).

For example, Participant D elaborated:

*“More time to master the complex rhythms of umtshotsho dance sequence of steps is needed. Ukufunda instruments like umrhubhe kuthatha ixesha elide noba ngunyaka umntu epractise.”*  
(Learning African indigenous music instruments such as the mouth bow takes too much time such as a year of practicing).

Yaka (2005), in his dissertation, defines *umtshotsho* as a gathering of Xhosa-speaking teenage boys and girls to bid farewell to a boy that will be circumcised the following day, wherein a variety of dances are performed for the whole night. Participant K highlighted that:

*“Rehearsing is the way to master the art of performing music, especially at university because we come from different cultures”.*

In the same vein, Participant X said:

*“At university, I learnt new dances of other cultures, that demanded for commitment, and regular practise, especially for songs that I was not familiar with. Now, I can dance umxhentso. I thought I could not dance ukusina until I observed another student that had initially never danced, attempting to dance, I realized that if commit myself to learn, I can also dance. The competitive spirit and belief helped me to learn.”*

Nota's (2017) research found that meaningful marimba music needed regular practice by group members rather than individual participants. Similarly, expertise grows with practice.

#### **4.1.3 Instructor's approach, peer coaching and the use of technological devices**

The study revealed more factors that encourage pre-service music teachers to participate in the IAM lessons at university. Certain responses advocated vehemently for a supportive attitude from lecturers as a contributing factor during lessons. It emerged that the approach used by the instructors and lecturers of showing participants their mistakes was good, and the focus was not on the mistakes only. An admirable quality in a facilitator is the ability to foster an atmosphere that is favourable to learning, which the author noted in her journal entry as leading to a shared sense of accomplishment among the group members.

Participant L said that the teacher actively listens to them and provides them with opportunities to express their thoughts on rehearsal methods.

Other members of the *umxhentso* ensemble echoed similar compliments about the instructors' approach. For example, Participant H said:

*"Instructors attitude such as patience, tolerance during lesson caused learning to happen. One instructor catered for slow learners and took time simplifying the technique."*

A participant revealed the patience and encouraging approach exhibited by the instructor. Another participant reflected on the facilitator's approach, which created a relaxed, supportive, and non-judgemental environment. In this study, the term 'instructor' refers to the person who facilitates the teaching and learning of IAM, regardless of academic qualifications. Akimenko (2016) refers to the teaching approach as the method of teaching students, implying the kinds of teaching and learning activities that a teacher conducts and the ways in which the teacher engages students with the subject matter.

I theorise that the extent to which participants' learning could be enhanced depends on the creation of a learning environment. The claim made by Acero, Javier, and Castro in Bathan (2021) emphasises that a good learning environment has a stimulating atmosphere, not only for physical surroundings and healthy circumstances but also for positive social and emotional attitudes to develop, thus inducing the effectiveness of learning.

Several participants' interview responses highlighted the efficacy of peer coaching.

*"I watched my friend that was dancing in the ensemble, and I developed interest. She taught me ukusina in our room at the residence."* (Participant H).

*"Please teach me this dance when we are back at school. You guys owe it to me coz it's you who made me fall in love with it. I want to learn and know how to dance so that I am able to teach school learners."* (Participant C pers. comm. 25 February 2022)

*"A participant that joins the ensemble late is assisted to be on par with other members, if the participant is slow in learning, we partner the participant with another one for mentoring."* (Participant D).

Peer coaching is described as a learning process in which peers observe one another and provide feedback, encouragement, and a sounding board (Matthewman, Nowlan & Hyvönen, 2018). The prior knowledge of some participants was beneficial, as student participants learned from, with, and alongside one another. The findings appear to support Tullis and Goldstone's (2020) conclusion that peer education may be an effective technique for developing new knowledge through debate among peers and enhancing student comprehension and cognitive ability.

Participants demonstrated the value of the technology-based learning model when they selected dance styles from YouTube videos. The intention was to incorporate these styles as variations into the dance sequences already covered in the WSU *umxhentso* ensemble module.

It emerged that the use of technological devices, such as YouTube dance videos, facilitated the learning of IAM. Participant C reflected in her journal entry, confirming the use of videos as a tool for teaching and learning. Regarding her experience, she stated that:

*"Here at university, we watch music videos from YouTube, copy styles, practice them, then add our creativity."* (Participant C).

Chikwaka, Ahmad, and Mohebi (2024) define technology-based teaching as a learner-centred strategy that employs a range of modern gadgets in the teaching and learning process. The use of technology in education goes beyond merely following digital trends; it involves leveraging these



technologies to enhance learning by making it more captivating, interactive, and applicable to students' daily lives (Johnes, 2024). As such, the authors argue that while accessing technology-based lessons may be convenient and enlightening, its limitations should be considered in comparison to the dynamic and visually stimulating oral transmission tradition regarding indigenous African music knowledge and skills acquisition (Ngoma & Fikelepi-Twani, 2024).

#### 4.2 Development of values and positive attitudes towards IAM

In research question 2, participants were asked, *“To what extent did pre-service music teachers develop skills, knowledge, values and attitudes towards IAM?”* The participants' responses and journal entries revealed that the involvement of pre-service music teachers in the project contributed to the development of values such as sharing, equality, and collaboration that are characteristic of Ubuntu. It emerged that learning IAM has a tremendous ability to revitalise culture by conserving traditions, unifying communities, and instilling a sense of identity and pride. Findings revealed that *ingoma* has the ability to unite people, encourages them to move away from misbehaviour, and promotes peace and pride in being Zulu, Xhosa, or Pondo. One:

*Sifundile kwi group yase Impunga, neyaku Tsembeyi neya Batlokwa. Ndifundile ukuba ingoma iyakwazi ukuba hlanganisa abantu. Ingoma ikhupha abantu entweni ezimbi, abantu uma belwa, ingoma iletha ukuthula. Uziqhenye ngento yakho uthi mina ngingumZulu, okanye umXhosa, okanye iMpondo. Nathi lento sesiphethe ingathi singayithatha siyoyifundisa ezikolweni. (We learnt from Impunga, Tsembeyi and Batlokwa groups. I learnt that IAM unites people. IAM effectively discourages individuals from engaging in negative conduct. IAM makes peace between fighting parties).*

Other participants mentioned that they were taught about the importance and value of IAM, equality, working with others and developed love for the music:

*“My lesson about the Indigenous African music taught me about equality and working together.”*  
Participant K.

*“IAM and different music instruments are important, I previously did not see their value in African culture but now I developed love for them.”* (Participant L)

Various participants highlighted a positive change of attitude towards IAM and a willingness to share the acquired knowledge and skills. Participant J stated:

*“What I have gained in this umxhentso research makes me proud of myself. I can teach people what I have learnt, and I succeeded in doing that because now in WSU I was selected as an assistant to help others.”* (Participant C)

*“I would like to share my views with other students because I like what I am doing and it was my second time playing umasengwane but I know how to do it, to be on beat and off beat. New students have joined this activity and they're enthusiastic and are really passionate and eager to learn and share information we acquire here.”* (Participant B).

Most importantly, a positive change of the mindset towards the love of IAM was revealed by many participants in their journal entries. One of the participants confirmed this claim, thus:

*Ininzi into endiyi fundileyo kule research project ye cultures ezizi ndidi ngendidi. Mna ndikhulele elokishini, izinto ze culture andizazi, ndingumXhosa ndisitsho nje. Abekho abanye abantu abanoku ziveza icultures zethu ukodlula thina because zezethu. Kwaye nathi iyasibonisa ukuthi xa sifumene le opportunity yoba siyibone into isenzeka sikwazi ukuyithatha siyoyifaka nakwabanye because ngoba si lost siyile generation yangoku. (I learnt a lot about various cultures in the research project. I grew up in the township hence I do not know indigenous cultures even though I am a Xhosa man. Other races cannot portray our cultures the way we as Black people do. As we are a lost generation that has had an opportunity of learning IAM, we will be able to teach others (Participant E).*

In essence, the study revealed the importance of employing the Ubuntu pedagogy as a transformational approach that values collective learning through interactions, sharing ideas, knowledge, and experiences. Drawing from an African communal practice, the results showed that students from diverse cultural backgrounds collaborated with one another, embracing and respecting each other's beliefs and experiences despite their differences. The creation of a learning space that affirmed students as knowledge creators and dignified human beings who can voice their opinions, regardless of religion and cultural background, emerged as a way of embracing Ubuntu pedagogy. The principles of Ubuntu fostered a positive learning environment for both students and teachers, as well as social cohesion, in contrast to pedagogical practices that force students to adopt Eurocentric expectations (Ngubane & Makua, 2021).

In concert with Tran and Wall (2019), the study revealed that an African Ubuntu, which prioritises humanness and interconnectedness, can be adopted in the teaching of IAM to music pre-service students as a way to reintroduce Afro-centric ideas and knowledge systems into an African classroom. Similarly, the significance of Ubuntu pedagogy, also known as Ubuntuogy, has been highlighted as an essential teaching methodology for the transmission of African values and the education of students. This is due to its ability to engage learners in collaborative learning of the curriculum while simultaneously disseminating African culture and heritage (Ngubane & Makua, 2021; Omodan, 2022c).

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This enquiry aims to contribute to scholarship by revealing the extent and effect of the approaches used in the teaching and learning of the IAM at Walter Sisulu University in South Africa from the perspective of pre-service music teachers. The study highlighted that intrinsic motivation assists in sustaining learners' interest. It reinforces the importance of creating a conducive learning environment by the instructor, where participants feel motivated, inspired to learn, and given a chance to voice their opinions. Emanating from the reflections discussed above, the study emphasised that while accessing technology-based lessons may be convenient and enlightening, its limitations should also be considered. Many responses revealed a positive change in mindset towards a love of IAM.

The article's findings encourage the dismantling of obstacles associated with marginalisation and elevate the status of IAM through a university music curriculum that strengthens Ubuntu pedagogy, fosters positive attitudes towards IAM, and promotes an understanding of and appreciation for cultural values, knowledge, and dynamics. This paper concludes that universities should strengthen the teaching and learning of IAM through the proposed approaches and weaken the Eurocentric methodologies that stem from Euroscepticism, individualism, and exclusivity. It is imperative to decolonise the teaching of music curricula in order to transition classroom relationships from authoritarian, hierarchical, and exclusionary forms of teaching and learning to more open and dynamic forms of interaction.

## **6. Declarations**

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**Data Availability:** Due to ethical considerations, the data cannot be made publicly available, but some of the data is available in the body of the work as verbatim transcripts.

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