Human Diversity and Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Challenges for higher music education

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ABSTRACT
This paper presents an analysis of the dynamics of human interactions and socio-cultural integration and their impact on indigenous knowledge systems, with a view to interrogating their implication for the teaching and learning of music in institutions of higher education towards social transformation. Based on desktop analysis and the case of the music programme at TUK, the paper lays emphasis on the concept of music as a body of knowledge and a way of knowing. Music’s content spells out its processes, from which ways of knowing and information dissemination are drawn. Indigenous knowledge is entangled in culture. In stable communities, shared concepts emanate from a common context. Where education is viewed as the community’s way of socialising its young, the common goals and shared philosophy of a stable community facilitate transfer of knowledge and the skills to use that knowledge. Modern society, however, is characterised by human diversity because of various dynamics in human existence. This affects the structure and nature of society, and resultant culture, one of whose expressions is music.

Music education takes place in formal, informal and non-formal contexts. As global cultural dynamics, relationships and mobility change, people’s appreciation and application of music and their notion of music education transform in tandem with developments in culture. The diversity of human experiences, practices, beliefs and preferences impact on their cultural practices, with implications for education. Anchored on constructivism, this paper explores higher education’s integration of indigenous knowledge to ensure its relevance in a dynamic society and music’s continuing role in social transformation through the content and process of music education.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, social transformation; indigenous knowledge, music education