

Emily A. Akuno

I Call It Music: Validating Diverse Music Expressions in the Classroom in Kenya

Introduction

This chapter¹ proposes the integration of learners' community music activities with the classroom experiences, by articulating the social significance of the music of learners' experience. Informed by the author's experiences as a performer-educator, it presents the need to conceptualise music from the consumer-learner's perspective, with a view to bridging the community-classroom divide and contributing to a meaningful music classroom experience for learners and teachers alike. Zake (1986) advises that Africa's cultures have music for every event of life, an indication of an abundance of musical moments and works. This ubiquity may not be to the advantage of the music learner, because it makes music something that everybody does. The challenge for the organisation of teaching in this context arises out of the diversity of musical expressions in the learners' environment, and their distinct elements that endear them to the learner on the one hand, and the requirements of a set curriculum on the other hand. A negotiation of this rift may lead to more productive music learning programmes, culminating in a more musically literate and culturally aware (intelligent) society. This article postulates that this can be achieved through a process of communal value acquisition (CVA), where the symbiotic relationship between the musician and his/her music leads to social recognition based on the value that their music is accorded by society. This recognition is a consequence of the cultural value and significance of the communal functions that the music graces and facilitates.