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# Promoting African Music and enhancing intercultural understanding in Teacher Education

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# Promoting African Music and enhancing intercultural understanding in Teacher Education

## **Abstract**

Australia is a culturally diverse nation. The Arts provide a pathway that contributes to the rich tapestry of its people. Tertiary music educators have the responsibility to provide opportunities to effectively prepare and engage pre-service teachers in becoming culturally responsive. The authors discuss the importance and need to include guest music educators as culture bearers when preparing pre-service teachers to teach multicultural music. Drawing on data from student questionnaires, author participant observation and reflective practice in 2014, the findings highlight the experiences and practical engagement of an African music workshop in teacher education courses. Generalisations cannot be made, however, the findings revealed the need, importance and benefits of incorporating guest music educators as culture bearers who have the knowledge, skills and understandings to contribute to multicultural music education. This experience may be similar to other educational settings and it is hoped that the findings may provide a platform for further dialogue in other teaching and learning areas.

## **Keywords**

Music education, Australian teacher education, Culture and diversity, African music.

## **Promoting African Music and Enhancing Intercultural Understanding in Teacher Education**

### **Setting the Scene**

In April 2014, Author 1 visited Griffith University as part of her academic study leave to work with Author 2 on a number of projects. One aspect of the visit was for Author 1 to present an African-music workshop to music-education students in the School of Education at Griffith University (Mount Gravatt Campus). Griffith University was established in 1975 and offers over 300 degrees or programs across five campuses. Students attending this university represent 131 countries (Griffith University 2014). Author 2 strongly felt that her students would gain considerably from the African-music workshop, as it was presented from someone from Africa, thus would present an authentic experience for her students. She also recognised the need and importance of including guest music educators as culture bearers when teaching about music and culture from another “land”, as she herself is Western-classically trained. As immersion to Africa was not possible or practical for Author 2’s students, an authentic experience from Author 1 provided an alternative opportunity. Belz (2006, p.42) points out that if non-Western music is to be learnt and studied it should be “with a member from that culture”. Author 1 was born in Johannesburg and lived there for more than three decades; she currently lives in Melbourne and introduced African music into the teacher-education programs at Deakin University beginning in 2001. As a music tertiary educator, she uses a pedagogy that links society, culture and history. As “each culture has its way of passing on the rules of music-making” (Nettle 1998, p.28), it is important to know what these are; and future teachers need to find out what they are before teaching music from another culture. Both authors were keen to explore students’ engagement in music-making (African) with an authentic culture bearer, and to demonstrate that it is possible to pass on knowledge, skills and understanding of another music and culture. The authors firmly believe that it is necessary to prepare teacher-education students to be culturally responsive. In their future classrooms, these students will teach children from various parts of the globe who come to live in Australia from a diverse range of languages, ethnicities, faiths, cultures and traditions. They have a responsibility to prepare their future students as global citizens respecting all cultures.

Music may provide a rich pathway for “strengthening the foundations of tolerance, reducing discrimination and violence, and learning to live together” (UNESCO 2014a). Australia is made up of waves of migration from various parts of the world and is considered a multicultural country. It is important to recognise that the word “multiculturalism” is used widely to describe diverse ethnicities, cultures and languages in societies. The notion of multiculturalism “embodies an ethic of acceptance of, and respect for, cultural diversity, community harmony and inclusion” (The Australian Collaboration 2013). Both authors are of the firm belief that the promotion of multiculturalism does not only occur through government policy, NGOs and other key organisations; rather, education is key to foster “respect for all people regardless of colour, gender, or national, ethnic or religious identity” (UNESCO 2014a). UNESCO (2014a) points out that it is “especially important to reach out to children and young people during their formative years, notably through educational materials and curricula”, to teach about tolerance and understanding of all people. The authors of the current study focus on the rich diversity that exists in Australia, where difference is celebrated and embraced as a way forward to learn of other people, including their music and culture. This paper makes a step towards documenting best practice in a music-as-culture approach to pre-service music-teacher education by focusing on the teaching and

learning of African music, where an authentic culture bearer (Author 1) shares music and culture in a music workshop with education students. The music-as-culture approach presents an opportunity for them to experience, connect and engage with non-Western music.

Australia is considered one of the world's three most culturally diverse nations where social harmony, social inclusion and commitment to respect difference is upheld (The Australian Collaboration 2013). It is not possible to provide exact figures of the number of Australians from each African country (see Hugo 2009), Hugo in his study of Africans found that together, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Sydney are home to 24% of African-born Australians. Thus Africans are part of the rich fabric of multicultural Australia. The arts, including music, provide a pathway that contributes to the rich tapestry of people, cultures and differences. According to Freedman and Stuhr (2013, p.4), "arts education can help future generations learn about themselves and their community". They further point out that arts education "preserves and transmits heritage, helping students to recognise and appreciate the diverse perspectives they will encounter in an increasingly global community" (p.4). The arts "connect people in a deep and powerful way", and engagement through the arts may help people have a "greater cultural appreciation, understanding and respect" for each other in the wider community (Multicultural Arts Victoria Annual Report 2010, p.4). Music engagement in educational settings is a powerful medium to understand, appreciate and embrace cultures and people. The notion of working with local communities, artists-in-residence and the wider arts community is central to the effective implementation of the Australian Arts Curriculum. The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts clearly outlines that "students will come to understand and engage with the multiple and culturally diverse practices of music, learning about Australian and international music"; they will also have the opportunity to "research traditions and contexts of music and music practices" (ACARA 2011, p.14). In a tertiary setting, Author 1 has previously argued that "by providing rich multicultural programs for our pre-service students in dance education, we can foster positive experiences that promote diversity and enhance intercultural and cross-cultural understanding" (Joseph 2013, p.135).

## Workshop on African Music: Context

As Africa is made up of 54 countries, giving a comprehensive knowledge of the music and cultures of the entire continent is unfeasible (Miya 2003). The music of Africa is clearly diverse in the way that it sounds from area to area and how it is used within society (Rocheleau 2009). Due to the limited time of the workshop, Author 1 focused on listening, singing, playing and moving. The music (including songs and CD sound tracks) and movements taught were presented "under the guidance of the cultural insider" (Nettle 1998, p.28). Students entered the workshop room to the sound track of *Umoja*. The fast and loud rhythms made them feel they had entered Africa. Of the four songs taught in the workshop, one was from West Africa and three from South Africa. The West African song *Yehmaya* was rote taught in three parts with scarfs and movement. The second song, a worksong called *Ra Sila Miele* from the sePedi people, was taught in unison with three different movements using body percussion through imitation. The third, *Masithi Amen* from the Xhosa people, was sung in unison with harmonic parts played on xylophones. Students were encouraged to improvise using non-melodic instruments (drums, claves, shakers etc.). The fourth, *Thumina Mina* from the Zulu people, was taught as a three-part unaccompanied hymn. A capella singing is central to South African indigenous music. To end the workshop, a rhythmic game of passing the stone was taught, where students listened to a sound track by *Mafikizolo* and passed claves (instead of a stone) around the circle to the beat and off the beat. This game was a fun way

to end the workshop in a circle (representing the African communal way of teaching and learning), but also giving the students an example of how to teach beat, listening and coordination.

Author 1 also provided the students with some theoretical underpinnings of African music. However, the focus of the workshop was on “doing” rather than just hearing about African music. In her talk about African music she emphasised that music permeates every aspect of life, and that it is interactive, participatory and communicative (Opondo 2000). The music of Africa may be classified as “traditional” or “contemporary” (Nzewi 1999). Music and movement (dancing) are inseparable and form a partnership in African culture. According to Green (2011, p.230) “there is no dance in Africa that is without some form of music, even if it is the voice or simple hand clapping”. Music-making in African society has a social function: unlike in Western culture, people in Africa perform music *with* each other rather than merely *for* each other (Miller 1989). Music is used to entertain, to accompany dances, plays, religious ceremonies and traditional rites and to mark special events such as birth, death, marriage and puberty (Agawu 2003). In African cultures, the oral tradition of teaching and passing down knowledge to children is generally accomplished through musical games. In this way they learn how to participate in areas of adult activity, such as fishing, hunting, farming, grinding maize and attending weddings, funerals and dances (van Rensburg 1998). Indigenous African music has relied entirely on an oral tradition of transmitting musical knowledge (Nompula 2011). The “intangible cultural heritage, also known as ‘living heritage’, refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills transmitted by communities from generation to generation” (UNESCO 2014b). This is learnt in highly interactive social events, and rituals where music is the predominant means of communication (Westerlund 1999). The current study contributes to the scholarship of teaching and learning conducted by both authors at their respective tertiary institutions.

## Methodology

This paper focuses on the teaching of non-Western music (African) as an effective way to promote multicultural understandings. Ethical clearance was obtained from Deakin University to undertake the research at Griffith University in 2014. For this paper, the authors drew on qualitative research methodology using questionnaires, observation and reflection. The questionnaire served as convenient sampling, as students were available at the time of Author 1’s visit to Griffith University. Purposive sampling served as a useful way to gain insights from a representation “of a given population [music specialists]” (Gay, Mills & Airasian 2012, p.141). The students participating in the African music workshop were Author 2’s music-education class. Author 1 explained the wider research project at the start of the music workshop and invited students to participate in a short anonymous questionnaire. Questionnaires are a logical and easy option to collect information (Wisker 2008), as they give students time to respond to the questions and are considered to be a cost-effective method to collect data (Strange, Forest & Oakey 2003). Author 1 handed out the questionnaire to all students, and compiled the results to gain feedback about the workshop. This negated any power coercion from Author 2. The study included questions that were both closed (such as requesting age and gender) and open-ended, such as, What is multiculturalism? Why is it important in Australia? What is African music? Why should it be included in the curriculum? What did or didn’t you enjoy in the workshop? What did you learn? What aspects were challenging? Of the 30 participants, 28 students completed the questionnaire. “Opened-ended questions are a very attractive device for smaller scale research or for those sections of a questionnaire that invite an honest personal comment from the respondents in addition to ticking numbers and boxes” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p.255). The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete at the end of the two-hour workshop.

Students left their questionnaires on the piano at the end of the workshop, and Author 1 later collected them.

In addition, the authors employed participant observation and reflective practice. Both authors read through the data on the day of the workshop and discussed some of the feedback. As reflective practitioners, we consider it important to discuss what we do in our teaching and see our “practice through the other’s eyes” to make it meaningful (Loughran 2002, p.33). In qualitative research, “the inquirer reflects about their role in the study and their personal background...for interpretations” (Creswell 2014, p.186). Hartwig (2014, p.87) argues that “through reflection, music teachers are able to access their own intentions and the aims of their actions”. As explored in this present study, students were able to “explain how the actions of the teacher[s] and the curriculum presented influenced the way they respond[ed]” (p.87). This was made possible through the questionnaire. Moreover, Author 2 had also participated in the activities whilst Author 1 taught, thus providing useful information on the participants and their engagement. “The observer becomes a part of and a participant in the situation being observed”; thus, Author 2 was a “researcher participant while observing and collecting data on the activities” (Gay et al. 2012, p.382). When analysing the questionnaires, both authors recognised a number of recurring themes, which will be individually discussed in the next section.

## Findings and Discussion

The participants in the African-music workshop were music-education students studying to be primary and secondary classroom music teachers. The age of the students ranged from 20 to 45: the cohorts were 20-25 (19 students), 26-30 (four students), 31-35 (one student), 36-40 (two students) and 41-45 (two students). They are enrolled in three different programs (Bachelor of Education Primary, Bachelor of Education Secondary and Graduate Diploma of Education Secondary), but attend a common music-curriculum subject. The closed questions revealed that there were four international students; and at least 15 identified themselves as mixed ethnicity (Australian and other). Eighteen females and 10 males completed the questionnaire. At the start of the workshop the students identified as having very little knowledge of Africa and its music. Only two students had previously visited Africa, one having travelled to Morocco and the other to Tanzania. As only one student stated in the questionnaire that they had undertaken professional development in African dance, all students were for the most part on the same level. The next section of this discussion will focus on the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

### ***What is your understanding of multiculturalism?***

As authors and tertiary music educators, we were seeking to gain some understanding of what multiculturalism meant for these students. There was a wide range of responses that were central to the students’ understanding. Words such as “culture”, “respect” and “community” were common. Given that the workshop was focused on music, only one student responded to the question from a musician’s perspective, saying that multiculturalism meant “different cultural music”, whereas other students had a broader understanding of the term. Some examples included:

- Respecting the traditions of others;
- Appreciating and acknowledging differences and realising the values each culture brings to society; and
- Different cultures expressing themselves in different ways, catering for and accepting these vast experiences.

Students recognised the importance of respect and inclusivity, as classrooms in Australia are now made up of children from all over the globe. As future teachers they used comments like “learning from different cultures” and “acknowledging and appreciating all the different cultures that make up society”. These sentiments also align well with the Australian Curriculum, which emphasises including all cultures that make up the Australian landscape (ACARA 2011). One student saw this embracing of multiple different cultures within society as “the new culture” for Australia.

### ***What is African music?***

Generally most of the students identified “rhythm” and “drumming” with African music.

Responses included:

- African music is drumming, singing, spiritual music;
- It is rhythmic, incorporating beautiful harmonies;
- Has an aural and percussion focus; and
- Is about call and response in singing.

Others recognised that African music is more than “rhythm” and “drumming”:

- It is a way of communicating;
- It involves participation and listening skills;
- Drumming is used in sending messages;
- Through songs music describes or tells a story; and
- It is a connection to the earth and nature.

### ***Why is African music important to include in the curriculum?***

All the students agreed that it is important to include music of all cultures in the curriculum. Some felt that promoting diversity in classrooms is essential and necessary to educate students about world music and the diversity of the world’s people. Comments such as “it is important to introduce students to new sounds and cultures” and “make students culturally aware” highlight the aims of inclusive education and the crucial need to educate the whole child. Music other than Western art music can be a valuable medium for the teaching of musical elements and concepts. As one student found, “African music can be a useful tool to teach every concept in music, e.g. rhythms, instruments, tone, timbre, structure”. Further comments included “it is a good way to teach polyrhythms” and that it can “broaden students understanding of rhythms and cultural music differences”. This reinforces that the students gained valuable insights into how African music can be adopted in classroom practice for something more meaningful than a fun experience. The workshop was delivered in an interactive way, as African music is about participation and doing within a group or community context. One student recognised that African music lends itself to a “hands-on approach that immerses students in the music they are learning”.

### ***Why and what did you enjoy in the class? What was challenging?***

The authors recognised that this was a one-off workshop on African music; hence it has limitations and no generalisations can be made. However, we wanted to identify some key elements of what the students enjoyed and what was challenging. All students gave very positive feedback and they used phrases indicating that it was “engaging, interactive and fun”, “very interesting and rewarding” and “practical and different” to express their experience and engagement. Although the workshop was “informative”, students also “loved the singing”; they identified their own participation as more effective than reading about the topic in a book or viewing a YouTube clip. Some were able to go beyond all this and relate the workshop material to their future teaching careers. Comments included:

- Author 1 was very entertaining and [I] loved the “two hats” approach of classroom teaching ideas and teaching in the university context;
- Very engaging and made links to teaching, giving real world experiences and connections;
- It was specifically directed to pre-service teachers;
- I would like to model and adapt some of the activities we did in the workshop in my classroom; and
- It was educational and fun, plus I think I could apply a lot of what I learnt to my teaching in the future.

Both authors observed during the workshop that each student participated willingly and attempted every activity. Nine students said that singing in an African language was a challenge for them. Author 1 in her previous research at Deakin University had found similar comments by her students (Joseph 2003 & 2005). The pronunciation of words in another language may present a challenge that applies in a broader context than the workshop examined here. Author 1 provided the music and helped students to break up the words, teaching them how to pronounce the words by rote before teaching them the melody. She also gave an English translation of the African text and reinforced the importance of consulting with an authentic person who can help them accurately pronounce the words and understand the context of the song (Tucker 1992). Similarly, Author 1 had found in previous research that students can find singing and moving to be a challenge (Joseph 2003 & 2005). Students described some of their challenges as:

- Coordination of body movement with singing and instruments;
- Keeping your own rhythm within a group context is not easy;
- Keeping a different rhythm to the others around me while singing;
- Keeping your own parts and not getting distracted; and
- Some of the body percussion in the work song was challenging.

Generally the students found that although it was “fun” and “different”, keeping their own polyrhythm within the ensemble was a new experience for many of them. As the student who identified as a classically trained musician stated, “it was difficult to memorise lines and improvise rhythms”. Western art music is mostly dependent on an exact interpretation of the written score, leaving the performer with few opportunities for improvisation. This sometimes presents a challenge for those who rely heavily on a written score.

***To what extent do you agree that your level of enjoyment has increased due to the teaching and learning of African music?***

(A five-point Likert scale was included: strongly agree, agree, partially agree, disagree and strongly disagree, and respondents had an opportunity to say why they chose as they did).

It was heartwarming that no one *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed*. Generally they commonly identified a few benefits; for example, the workshop was “fun”, “exciting” and “different”, and “the songs were uplifting”. From the 28 respondents, 13 *strongly agreed* that their level of enjoyment increased [**enjoyment of what? increased relative to what?**]. Some of the reasons included that “[the workshop] was very interactive and light-hearted and everyone could do it!” In contrast, another said, “It was tricky though manageable, and I enjoyed the rhythm exercises.” Students recognised how music connected them to the source culture:

- It made me culturally aware;
- I got to participate in the playing of African music. Something I’ve never done before and I like trying new things;



- I now have knowledge I can implement in classes and activities which are fun and engaging;
- I cannot wait to incorporate it in a classroom, I learnt some great ideas; and
- Drumming and rhythmic games, songs and scarves were fantastic.

Of the 12 students who *agreed* that their level of enjoyment increased, some commented on the social interaction in the class. Comments such as “the hands-on nature creates a fun and an interactive learning environment” and “the atmosphere created a community as we worked together to create music” further reinforce the social and community music-making underlining the principles of African music. The notion of social learning, working in small groups and working in community seemed to be an important factor for students; another mentioned that “the way music is passed through generations is very interesting and so community based, which excites me as I want to create a very community-based learning environment when I teach”. Of the three students who partially agreed that their level of enjoyment increased, only one remarked, “I have always had a strong respect for world music and so my enjoyment level was already pretty high and probably cannot get much higher”. Students overall indicated a high level of enjoyment and engagement as they experienced non-Western music in their own university setting.

### ***What role does African music play in Australia?***

It was most welcoming to read the social constructs students identified in the wider context of Australian citizenship. One person said, “There is a strong parallel culturally between music in Africa and Indigenous Australians, i.e. beat, rhythm, oral traditions and customs.” In the main, most recognised the benefits of embracing non-Western music and cultures. In particular, one said, “The more understanding we have of other cultures the more accepting and open we are to other cultures.” Another student thought that “it would benefit children to learn about the music from other countries due to changing times, globalisation and multiculturalism in Australia”.

Other students felt:

- Through African music children can learn to value and appreciate multiculturalism and values;
- It can enhance cultural awareness and teach about diversity;
- It can promote diversity in a fun and engaging way; and
- It has the potential to teach unity in a team way where you get to understand your peers.

These comments by the students help to bring to the fore the power and influence that music may have in a changing society where differences of all cultures can be respected and celebrated in education and community contexts.

### **Authors’ Reflection**

This was the first time Author 1 had presented an African music workshop interstate. Her experience was similar to that at her own university. Author 2 had never presented African music to her group of students; hence, it was a new experience for her to be able to observe her students as well as being a participant. Author 2 recognised the value of having a guest as a culture-bearer from Africa, as it was not possible to take her students to Africa. Upon reflection, Author 1 realised that wearing two hats (one as practitioner/artist and the other as music tertiary educator) provided students with useful and practical experience and ideas on how to teach the African songs and movement used in the workshop for classroom practice. Through call and response, rote and imitation, students were able to grasp ways of teaching and gained some knowledge regarding the context of the songs taught. Author 2 found the opportunity to see her students “in action”

with a guest lecturer very worthwhile, giving her a new insight on how some of the students interacted and participated in a workshop situation. At the commencement of the semester, Author 2 had informed the students that there would be a guest lecturer taking a workshop on African music, and gave them access to Author 1's African Music website. When the students arrived for the workshop, Author 2 observed that some were quite taken back to find very loud rhythmic music playing. Some looked excited and their bodies immediately responded in movement to the beat of the music (*Umoja*); a few, however, were very hesitant at first to enter the classroom and their faces had an anxious look.

As Author 1 began the workshop with a brief overview of Africa and its music and culture, students became very settled in their chairs, thinking they would be listening to a traditional type of lecture. However, after 10 minutes of formal lecture style, the students were asked to clear a large seating area into an open space for the practical engagement. Author 1 provided Western notation for three of the four songs. Africans in choral music continue to use the tonic sol-fa system introduced during the 19th century (Stevens 2001). Students were shown examples of sol-fa and staff notation and had the opportunity to sing from both forms of notation. Although this was not traditional in African contexts, as music is generally taught by rote, the aim was to assist students with the melody line and the pronunciation of the text, given that there was much to accomplish during the allotted lecture time. Staff and sol-fa notation has a place when transmitting African music, as it permits the promotion and preservation. During the first song, the students participated in the unison singing; however, the interest and excitement increased when the song was sung in three-part harmony. At this initial stage, the students had not yet moved spontaneously, unlike Author 1 herself, who presented in an energetic style that complemented the African song and the movement it tended to encourage. As the workshop progressed, with the direction and guidance of Author 1, the students soon embraced the movement and willingly entered into the spirit of the music. Author 2 noted that some of the quieter male students found a place in the workshop and expressed themselves without reserve. As an experienced music educator, Author 1 ensured that the activities, ideas and ways of teaching could readily be transferred to the students' future classroom settings. Both authors noted that it was a challenge for some students to sing (in parts and unison) while moving and/or playing instruments to make sounds that differed from the main melody. Author 2 has previously presented music and songs from around the globe to her class; however, this was the first time that the whole workshop was dedicated to the teaching and learning of African music. This meant that the students were extended from their comfort zones of the familiar lecturer and content for the full two-hour workshop. Although there were no rest breaks during the workshop, the students were very keen to extend the time and requested more songs. As Author 1 was a guest in the room, the students were hesitant to initially ask questions about the songs, music, people and culture of Africa. As the workshop progressed Author 1 became part of the classroom through the "communal" music-making of sharing, showing and telling; this gave the students the confidence to ask questions, take risks and fully engage in the music. She gave reference to her own students in Melbourne and commented on how they responded and reacted to learning African music, which reassured the students that their challenges were acceptable. Working away from her own university setting and students, Author 1 also experienced the "newness" of the situation at the start of the workshop, but soon relaxed as she felt the acceptance and cooperation from the group. The workshop was teacher-directed in terms of learning the songs and the movement. The choice of instruments, improvisation and body percussion was left entirely to the individual students, allowing autonomy for improvisation. This strategy allowed the students to extend their creativity. Author 2 observed that some students worked well with specific direction and others thrived on the improvisation tasks and immersed themselves in the music-making. Both authors used this opportunity to reflect on actual classroom practice and what can be achieved given the resources available in any

context. There were times when Authors 1 and 2 supported each other in the delivery of the songs by leading the sectional movements and part-singing. They also worked together to initially encourage and motivate the students with positive reinforcement. In this way they modelled good classroom-teaching practice.

## Conclusion

This paper documents a one-off workshop on African music run by experienced music educators as a form of professional development, but which also provided an authentic learning experience for students (Nettle 1998, Nethsinghe 2012). Both authors, like the music-education students, found this experience enriching and rewarding. As reported in the findings section, the students recognised the value of the workshop as participatory and inclusive. The opportunity to work together in a shared space and reflect on their practice reinvigorated their passion for music teaching. Author 1 provided what Erwin et al. (2003, p.135) refers to as “an insider’s view of the culture”; specifically, that of African people from South Africa. The workshop provided Author 2 with a way that incorporated a guest culture-bearer for her students to gain some skills and understandings of a new and different music. According to Lundquist (1998, p.44) “the ideal music experience is led by an exemplary musician-teacher from a specific music culture, who is expressive in the language of the culture, cares about music and students and remains a continuing student of that musical tradition”. Hence, Author 1 regularly returns to South Africa to undertake professional development in African music as she continues to share music and culture with tertiary education students in Australia. It was evident from both authors’ observations and from verbal feedback to Author 1 at the end of the workshop that the students enjoyed the new music sung in the original African language and learnt about the African cultures presented (Anderson & Campbell 1989). Joseph and Southcott (2013, p.243) confirm that “the promotion and provision of multicultural music education is essential at all levels of education. This can be achieved by the inclusion of diverse culture bearers, artists-in-schools, and community engagement to work with both teachers and their students”.

The activities in this workshop may only have had an impact on student’s skills and understanding of different ways to teach the songs. Abril (2006, p.40) warns that “teachers should not assume that experiences with multicultural music are sufficient to promote tolerance, acceptance, and/or value in students”. He rightfully points out that “if educators do not engage students in explicit discussion surrounding sociocultural issues, students may react negatively to the unfamiliar musical styles or cultures” (2006, p.40). The authors agree with Abril (2006) that “further research might investigate the most effective ways in which to interweave musical and sociocultural objectives for optimal student learning” (p.[?]). The authors assert that as music tertiary educators they have a responsibility to teach their students about different music and songs from other cultures. The workshop was concerned with the experience as it was lived, felt and undertaken (Sherman, Webb & Andrews 1983). It is hoped that the students will adapt and adopt what they learned from the African-music workshop to actual classrooms. As music-education students they recognised that African music is an exciting and fun way to teach some of the elements or concepts in music such as rhythm, beat, tempo and dynamics. Generalisations cannot be made from such a small qualitative research sample; however, it is hoped that the reflections made by the students and authors are insightful and will provide a platform for further dialogue regarding what is relevant and valuable for student teachers as they prepare to be music teachers.

Continued research in this area can only help tertiary educators prepare students to be effective teachers (Rohwer & Henry 2004). This study at Griffith University will continue with Author 1

providing professional-development workshops to further up-skill teacher-education students in the specific area of African music. Students will then trial some of the activities learnt on campus as they increase their understanding of the theory-practice nexus on their school placement (experience/practicum) later in the year. Follow-up research through observations, interviews and questionnaires will further inform the authors of the benefits of including guest culture-bearers in tertiary education programs, and whether the onsite workshop was adapted or adopted effectively by students when on placement. The inclusion of African music aligns with the “general capabilities” and the commitment to engage with a wide range of music and culture of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA 2014). This research-led documentation of best-practice in teaching music from another culture reaffirms the authors’ assertions that music requires no visa to travel; students can be transported through songs to travel to other places. By showing, telling and learning of a different culture, music educators can share, borrow, listen and dance to the music from other places. In this way, Solbu (1998, p.37) argues, “we will, through music, meet each other as individuals with all of our joys and sorrows, dreams and longings”.

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