

Has Mobile Learning (M-Learning) taken over music pedagogy?

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Abstract

The emergence of Mobile Learning (M-Learning) in education, that is, learning via digital or technological interface, has completely transformed the nature of teaching and learning music. Students can now access virtually anything in music via a digital interface. Although this is a positive development in education but the monopolization of music education by digital gadgets is worrisome. Most music students now prefer to go online for their studies instead of attending lectures. They believe that those digital platforms are more advanced than the lecturers assigned to teach the courses. However, most of the lessons sourced online are fraught with some inadequacies and unacceptable principles. The research studied undergraduate students of the Department of music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and found out that certain features of a normal human teacher-learner interaction such as, lesson and curricular planning, motivation, conditioning, sequencing, and feedback are missing in the so called mobile learning. The paper suggests the need for moderation in accessing Mobile learning amongst students and for music lecturers to rise to the challenge by making their lessons fulfilling for the students.

Introduction

The gains of technological advancement in music education have been praised by many scholars (Macdonald, 2002; Onuora-

Oguno, 2009). Music learners can now tap into assorted internet and multimedia devices to garner information and knowledge on any topic in music. Such digital platforms as youtube is laden with so many music instructors on various aspects of musicology like trumpet, violin, saxophone, piano, guitar, percussion, and voice training. Social media platforms such as facebook also boast of numerous music learning videos. Some have even created personal blogs where they teach music to the world. This digital proliferation of music education has raised many pertinent questions which this paper has sought to address:

- What is the need for teacher education in music?
- How qualified are these mobile music teachers?
- What curricula inform these digital music teaching platforms?
- Which body or organisation certifies and regulates what goes on on these platforms?
- What is the place of formal music education in schools and institutions in the face of these developments?
- How is the mobile teaching and learning evaluated?
- What criteria form the basis of the evaluation?

The nature of music

Music is an art and art involves the creation of beautiful or thought provoking works, e.g. in painting, music or writing (Encarta Dictionary, 2009). The creative nature of music makes it more of a natural endowment in man than a learned practice. Even though people can learn music in formal settings at home, school, or institutions of learning, but the talent for music is native. The world has witnessed many prodigies in music: people who have composed, written, and performed great musical works even without recourse to any formal training. This fact does not

and should not subjugate or relegate formal music training or learning to the background. Music education serves its useful purposes in life because it has helped in the development of many theories and practices that have sustained the art.

The problem with native endowment in music is that many people have taken it too far. Being gifted in music does not automatically translate to being a music tutor, teacher, or instructor. This misconception has led to many folks assuming music tutorship on the internet. The ability to play a musical instrument or interpret notated piece of music by sight is a fundamental trait of musicianship but it does not qualify the bearer to teach music.

Teaching music

Teaching is the organization and conduct of learning experiences (Leonhard and House, 1972). Music teaching is a specialized area of musicology professionally called music pedagogy. This aspect of music involves a lot of training and professionalism for its delivery. Ekong (2009) captures this point adequately:

For one to teach music effectively, first, he/she should be adequately knowledgeable about what to teach, whom to teach, how to teach and under what condition. The implication of this opinion is that the music teacher must know himself/herself, know his/her learner, know the subject matter, know the method to use, etc. the teacher, therefore, is the purveyor of the subject matter and has a duty of organising knowledge into logical units to suit his learners. (p. 23).

Ekong's notification above also raises some issues on the part of professional music educators regarding the teacher being knowledgeable about the subject matter. The point is clear and it creates a serious problem: if the classroom music educator is deficient in a subject matter, then the students cannot be prohibited from switching to a mobile learning platform via the internet for help. This problem appears to be one of the major factors encouraging mobile learning among students.

Theories of instruction and the conditions of teaching music

Instructional psychologists have developed many theories about the nature and effects of interactions between teachers and learners which influence the conditions of learning. One leading instructional theorist is David Ausubel who propounded the theory of meaningful reception. Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2010) enlighten us more on this:

David Ausubel (1968) maintained that a person's existing cognitive structure is the foremost factor governing whether new material is potentially meaningful as well as how readily it can be acquired and retained. In his theory of meaningful reception, the role of the learner is to receive ideas and information, with the teacher being the lecturer or explainer. Critical to the learner's meaningful reception of new information is the provision of 'advance organisers' by the teacher, the structuring of a foundation of familiar ideas on which new information can be laid. The teacher who outlines the material to be covered and

goals to be met is also organizing for children (the learner/s) in advance the learning that will occur (p.33).

The sensitization above highlights the need for the music teacher to understand that learning should not be about lumping of materials and ideas for the learner to grasp; there has to be adequate understanding of the learner's readiness with regards to his existing cognitive structure before any meaningful learning can take place. This theory exposes a major shortfall of mobile learning: "lumping of instructions and learning activities for the learner without recourse to his readiness in assimilating such".

There are also certain conditions which affect music instruction. Some of them are sociological, psychological, physical, environmental, etc., and they should not be ignored if the teacher desires a favourable outcome. The physical appearance of any teacher affects a learner in so many ways. If the learner finds the teacher unattractive or too attractive that creates some attention problems. Such qualities as the height, complexion, voice, and gesticulations of the teacher bear so much in the context of learning. The acoustics of a music instruction room should also be considered before any meaningful teaching can take place particularly in teaching voice or certain musical instruments like the brass and woodwind instruments.

Learning music

Learning has been defined as 'a process which begins with a problem, progresses to the solution of the problem by the apprehension, clarification, and application of meaning and results in a change in behaviour' (Leonhard and House, 1972).

Learning music is not as easy as it appears. The nature of music also makes the learning peculiar. As a matter of principle, music educators search for certain physical, mental, physiological and psychological indices that are beneficial to effective music learning. Some of such indices are auditory perceptibility of sounds, good sight for sight reading of notes, strong and flexible fingers for handling musical instruments, pitch sense of the learner, vocal range of the learner, etc. All of these checks might give an impression that music learning is only tenable for a select few but they are actually the bulk of criteria that qualify music learning as serious endeavour.

Actually not every learner comes with or is expected to come with all the aforementioned abilities. It would not be feasible but every learner is expected to know what is expected of him or her at least. Trying to learn music when one is 'tone deaf' is a futile exercise. Tone deafness is an auditory impairment that impinges on the bearer's ability to discriminate sounds. Besides physical soundness, every learner of music should be conscious of the need for self-preparedness and readiness required for learning. Ekong (2009) advises on that:

A learner, usually, is the knowledge-recipient. This does not connote redundancy. He must do something to bring about learning. His temperament, intentions, health, etc., and, above all, his learning style(s) determine(s) his willingness and readiness to learn. He must be receptive to any information he is given and be ready to go extra mile to explore other avenues for information. (p.24).

The submission above also raises another issue which appears to spur the push for mobile learning among students. When the music learner has no zeal to work on his readiness and attitude towards learning he easily finds solace on mobile platforms where he believes he can chart the course of his learning by the manipulation of buttons on his mobile gadget.

Gane's conditions of learning music

Robert Gane's descriptive studies of cognitive processes have led to his development of the influential 'eight conditions of learning' (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2010). The conditions include a progression of sensory information from perception to concept formation and the conditions embrace the need for preparing learners for new information. They are listed below:

- Gaining and maintaining attention
- Preparing learners for instruction
- Presenting the material
- Prompting and guiding learning
- Providing conditions for response
- Providing feedback for response Promoting and measuring retention
- Enhancing transfer of learning to new tasks or information

The import of Gane's theory is that learning does not just take place; the teacher must be conversant with select processes and 'conditions' that would facilitate that.

Some teaching methods and learning styles employed in music and their implications for mobile learning

Besides theories of instruction and learning theories adaptable for music there are also various tested and proven methods of

teaching music which should be employed in the field of music education for good results. It should be noted also that there is no best method of teaching music. The fact is that the subject matter dictates the method of instruction and a search for a method of instruction applicable to all kinds of subject matter in music is not tenable. Some of the most popular teaching methods in music are outlined below:

- **Dalcroze: movement with a mission.**

The Dalcroze approach is three-pronged, including not only a unique form of rhythmic movement called eurythmics but also ear training and improvisation. The founder of the Dalcroze approach was Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), a swiss musician who served as professor of solfege, harmony and composition. He astutely recognized that, despite the advanced stages of technical proficiency that his students demonstrated through the playing of their instruments, notable gaps were evident in their musical abilities. Simple rhythms were wrongly rendered, and flaws in pitch and intonation were frequent. Students were demonstrating mechanical, not musical, understanding (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2010).

- **Kodaly: Inner Hearing and Music Literacy**

The underlying philosophy of the Kodaly approach to music is that ‘music belongs to everyone’. Kodaly maintained that music is the right of not only the talented few but all children, who can and should develop performance, listening, and literacy skills, who can read and write with ease. With music instruction beginning in early childhood, children discover folk and art music through a sequence that begins with singing and leads to the development of musically independent individuals. Kodaly

proponents believe that the content and sequence of the curriculum should be derived from children's musical development and from their musical literature. While hands and rhythmic syllables are closely associated with this approach, it is far more comprehensive than these techniques suggest, with systematic training that results in musical and musically literate children at an early age (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2010).

- **Orff: Expression through musical Experience**

Cambell and Scott-Kassner (2010) report that:

The influence of the Orff approach on the teaching of music to children has been explosive since its introduction to North America in the 1960s. The natural behaviours of childhood- singing, saying, dancing, playing, along with improvisation and creative movement- form the basis of the system (p. 52).

These are just a few of a plethora of music teaching methods. Others exist such as Suzuki, Gordon, etc. The existence of these methods peculiar to music teaching shows the peculiar and dynamic nature of music. Music as a discipline places serious demand on both the teacher and the learner in such a way that it must be approached with some appreciable methodology and professionalism. If the mobile music instructor on the internet is familiar with the underlying theories and methods in handling music then his work would be conventional and productive but the reverse is usually the case. One should not despise the idea behind admitting teachers in colleges of education and high institutions just to learn music and how to teach it. Many music

teachers enrolled as music students in higher institutions and spent about four years exposed to various aspects of musicology with all the drills and graduated in a specialized area with some mastery on a musical instrument. If learners jettison those experiences that accompany trained musicologists and embrace mobile learning because of its presumed accessibility and popularity then we have a problem.

Some learning methods and styles employed in music and their implications for mobile learning

Just as teaching methods exist, there are also learning styles and some of them are peculiar to music. Some of them are outlined below:

- **Discovery learning**

This type of learning involves problem solving, requiring the learner to manipulate materials and to cope with incongruities from which information is derived (Cambell and Scott-Kassner (2010)).

- **Comprehensive musicianship**

The goal of this method is to achieve a descriptive, performing, and creative competence and it involves relating theory and history to performance and composition.

- **Gordon system**

The goal of this style is to learn audiation, that is, hearing music in the mind. It involves listening, reading, writing discrete tonal and rhythmic patterns.

- **Manhattanville system**

This model involves improvement of musicianship through experimentation and exploration that is, exploring, creating, and performing.

- **Weikert learning style**

The weikert system strives towards the development of feeling for steady beat and it involves folk dancing as a principal means to achieve that (Cambell and Scott-Kassner (2010)).

The essence of these learning methods and styles is to furnish the music teacher with the awareness that, learners possess one or more types of intelligence; learners process information through a preferred sensory channel: visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic; a variety of factors influence learning: emotional, social, and physical; learners may be content bound, experiencing concepts as embedded within the environment; or content independent, experiencing concepts as discrete entities removed from their background.

The nature and dynamics of mobile learning

What exactly is mobile learning and how does it operate? Wikipedia (2019) defines mobile learning as ‘learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices’. It explains further that:

It is a form of distance education, M-learners use mobile device educational technology at their convenience. M-learning technologies include handheld computers, mp3 players, notebooks, mobile phones and tablets. M-learning focuses on

the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies.

Some keywords call for attention here: ‘learning across multiple contexts’, ‘personal electronic devices’, ‘distance education’, and ‘mobile device educational technology’. We shall examine these key words under the advantages and disadvantages of mobile learning.

- **Advantages of M-Learning**

- **Accessibility**

Mobile learning is more easily accessible than any other form of learning. The learner can access ideas and materials from virtually anywhere and whenever he chooses. This feature renders the problem of unavailability or unpreparedness of the teacher inconsequential.

- **Portability**

The learner actually ‘carries’ his learning along with him/her. With mobile learning every geographical barrier to learning is somewhat overcome. This feature breaks the stereotyping, arranging, and formalities involved in normal classroom settings. M-learning also brings strong portability by replacing books and notes with small devices.

- **Convenience**

Mobile learning brings in a lot of convenience to learning. Besides taking control of the learning, the learner also chooses the most convenient place, position, approach, and duration for his learning. This feature cuts off the regimentation that comes with formal classroom learning.

- **Cost-effective**

Mobile learning has the added benefit of being cost effective, as the price of digital content on tablets is falling sharply compared to the traditional media (books, CD and DVD, etc.). One digital textbook, for instance, costs one-third to half the price of a paper textbook with zero marginal cost.

- **Informal and discovery learning**

M-learning has created the opportunity for learners who have no access to formal learning in schools or institutions to acquire knowledge irrespective of their dispositions. Mobile learning has also enhanced discovery learning. Discovery learning is where the learner searches for and acquires ideas, knowledge and skills on his own without the instrumentality of any tutor. These two forms of learning are very beneficial in this age because of the demand for skills and not college degrees and certificates. The two forms of learning are also very productive in learning musical instruments which demand skill.

- **Distance education**

Mobile devices can be used especially for distance education or with students whose courses require them to be highly mobile. So many higher institutions of learning around the world have employed this with some reasonable results. So many people have completed their degrees in so many fields via distance education through the instrumentality of mobile learning.

The problems with mobile learning

Although m-learning has its numerous merits, the demerits appear to outweigh them. Below are the problems intrinsic to mobile learning:

- **Standardization**

As lofty as m-learning sounds, the problem of standardization still lingers. There is no existing body that regulates, or stipulates the content of instruction. Education is based on and should be based on principles whether the form of education is formal or informal and one of those underlying principles in education is standardization. If every instructor devises their subject and content of instruction, it makes the whole exercise haphazard. In music, for instance, this creates serious problems because of the diverse nature of the subject. Music involves theory, composition, performance, dance, instrumentation, production, organology, etc. There are professional bodies in music that are preoccupied with the standardization of musical practice in schools and institutions of learning. In Nigeria for example, we have Association of Nigerian Musicologist (ANIM), Conference of Music Educators of Nigeria (COMEN). These bodies associate for professional advancement and standardization of music practice.

- **Stratification of objectives**

The objectives of any given teaching context should always be stated before the commencement of instruction. This may appear trivial but it helps the teacher, the learner and even the administrators or supervisors to know if the goal of the instruction was achieved or not. The teacher does not only state his objectives, he also states how he or she would realize them. This is completely missing on mobile learning platforms.

- **Curriculum management**

Any educational endeavour that has no formidable curriculum as fulcrum is bound to fail.

- **Teacher-learner interaction**

Mobile learning operates on the premise that every learner comes with the readiness and positive attitude to learn. This presumption neglects that the supposed learners are human beings and not robots who have no feelings, psychological upsets, physical discomforts, nor emotional hang-ups. Teacher-learner interaction is very crucial to learning. If the teacher fails to cue in to the physical and emotional dispositions of his student, he would encounter serious problems. If the teacher notices that his students are feeling sleepy, for example, he needs to pause to find the reason for that, solve the problem, or even adjourn the class. This is called 'feedback' in teaching and this feedback is lacking in mobile learning.

- **The problem of assessment**

Except for institutions which run online courses, most mobile learning platforms do not assess the academic welfare of their students. This is worrisome. It is not enough to lump up materials for the prospective learner, he or she should be assessed periodically. The essence of educational assessment is to systematically monitor the development of the learner. In classroom setting it comes with some appellations such as test, quiz, exam, etc.

- **The problem of evaluation**

Evaluation tests the productivity of an entire educational system. It can come annually or biannually depending on the system. It seeks to ascertain how far an educational process has succeeded or failed ranging from the administrators, educators, curriculum, subject contents, teachers, learners, instructional materials,

learning environment, and even parenting. Leonhard and House (1972) make this input on evaluation:

Evaluation is the process of ascertaining the extent to which the objectives of education are achieved. The primary purpose of evaluation is the improvement of instruction. Evaluative procedures are used to determine status so that progress toward educational goals can be appraised. Evaluation also provides data for grading and marking, may serve as a means of motivation for students, and is an essential technique of research (p.28).

- **Exceptional learners**

Mobile learning has failed to account for the large percentage of the world's population who are exceptional learners. Exceptional learners are learners who have challenges that impede or impinge on their learning. Some learners have autism, dyscalculia, aphasia, speech defects, dumbness, deafness, blindness, etc. These categories of learners should be accommodated and accounted for in education. There are special schools now for the blind, deaf and dumb, etc., but this group of learners has not been considered to fit into mobile learning family despite all the claims of technological advancements by the exponents of this learning style.

- **Laziness**

Mobile learning has created an unprecedented flux of laziness among learners particularly undergraduate students. Students sleep with their mobile devices on, come to school with them,

move into lecture halls with them, take notes with them, and finally move into examination halls with them. This is quite disturbing. They prefer to download materials online, read online, practice online, and even rehearse online. The so called convenience in learning that comes with these mobile devices has turned the students into lazy learners. They all reason that the energy and time spent in ready could be saved by downloading that from a mobile site but they forget that as the learner spends time in reading and studying so is he/she training himself/herself to be dogged and studious in life.

- **Examination malpractice**

Mobile learning has created a rise in malpractice among university undergraduate students. Each semester examination comes with so many students caught cheating with their phones or trying to smuggle some digital devices into the examination halls. The latest technique among them now is to use Bluetooth to play out and listen to recorded texts and materials in examination halls. The issue is that every course content is virtually online and because one can never enforce reading and studying on his students, these students prefer to download and upload these materials on their devices not for reading but for use in examination halls.

Factors responsible for the rise of mobile learning in music

Some factors have been found to be responsible for the advent and rise of mobile learning and they are analysed below:

- **Technological Advancement**

It is not out of place that technological advancements around the globe would affect education and particularly music. Technology

has reshaped the way we communicate, interact with our environment, view the world, and the way we think. Other fields of human endeavour like medicine, pharmacology, engineering, aeronautics, and education have also been influenced. Some of this influence are productive and commendable while some are relatively unproductive hence the theme of this paper.

- **Teacher incompetency**

It is natural that when teachers fail to deliver in their course content the students become frustrated and seek out other avenues for help. It behooves every teacher to be knowledgeable in his area of practice. Music, being a more practical area, demands that the prospective music teacher should be first talented in the field; acquire necessary training and skills for the delivery of the subject. If one is assigned to teach on a particular instrument such as guitar or trumpet, professionalism requires that he or she should be competent on that instrument so that the students can benefit under his/her tutelage. When the music teacher is incompetent in a practical and demanding subject like music, the students would be forced to seek for help and they find mobile platforms and settle for that. When this happens, it becomes difficult to win back the trust and zeal of the learners to the teacher or to the classroom.

- **Learner apathy towards methodology**

Naturally most learners and students show apathy to the rules and methodology that decorate classroom teaching and learning. 'Settle down', 'bring out your notes', 'listen to this; listen to that', pay 'attention', 'read chapters four and five of the text' 'submit your assignments tomorrow' , 'practice embouchure on your trumpet', 'you need to sit for about two hours to study the piece

by Mozart’, ‘answer to your names’ etc. These are some of the instructions, rules, regimentation, and methodologies students encounter in the course of their learning and many of them find it disgusting to be moulded this way. In learning musical instruments one finds a plethora of commands, instructions, and tenets to follow in order to learn any instrument. In wind instruments like the saxophone, you have to first learn how to hold the instrument; how to form embouchure with your lips; how to breathe; and how to tongue on the reed of the instrument. Therefore learning requires so much attention and patience from the learner and if such positive attitude is not developed, learning is hindered. The situation is that students easily rush online in order to avoid these commands and rather seek for an interactive platform where they can actually issue commands themselves by manipulating the buttons on their mobile devices.

- **Modernism**

Modernism is a philosophical ideology that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology (Wikipedia, 2019). At the base of modernism is the push and quest for new ways of doing things and this has cut across fashion, diets, religions, cultures, languages, economies, and educational systems. Our world is changing and adjusting to new ideas faster than we could imagine but as some of these changes are beneficial to certain areas of life; some of them are not. For instance, modernism has eroded many cultural values across the globe just as many languages and races have gone into extinction. The new provocative and indecent dress codes trending now among youths are as a result of the inroads of modernism. Processed and quick-fix foods such as instant

noodles and pastries have now replaced and taken over normal foods and diet. Education is not spared the ensuing imbroglio.

The quest for new ways of handling education has ushered in some commendable innovations such as enhanced classrooms, curriculum development, productive educational policies and advancement of course contents, improved teaching and learning methods, digital teaching and learning materials, improved educational affiliations and linkages, etc., but there are certain problems that have come with all these regarding education.

Modernism is pushing traditional educational methodologies and ideologies into extinction and this is the issue this paper is trying to address. Some modernist educational schools of thought are advocating for the ditching of traditional classrooms in place of other models like mobile classrooms, and out-of-class-studentship (Inozu, ,2018) Going by these, classrooms may go into extinction in the closest future. It is no surprise, therefore, that everyone – both teachers and learners- are transforming their approaches to education in order not to be left out in the scheme of things. Every student would prefer to learn via his mobile device rather than to sit through the ritual of classroom work.

- **Advancement in musicology**

Musicology has advanced so much that it is no longer the business of music educators and musicologists alone. Acoustics, for instance, is a topic in music even though it is pure physics and ideas in this topic are changing with every new discovery on it. Musical acoustics is at the base of the aspect of music called organology which is preoccupied with the crafting of musical instruments. Musicologists compose, interpret, and perform music using musical instruments but the crafting or making of those instruments is the preoccupation of technocrats. As a

consequence, the tuning and updating of such musical instruments as the Grand Piano or the Digital piano requires parameters and soft wares which are downloadable from designated online points for precision. As a matter of fact, the setting up and formatting of a digital piano requires serious online training from the company that produces it (Yamaha Company for example). Even when the manual is packaged along with the instrument, there is always a reference for online updating of the software that runs the operating system of the piano.

- **Globalization**

Globalization is not a new movement; everyone wants to meet everybody thereby reducing the world to a global unit. It has been defined as ‘the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide’ (Wikipedia, 2019). The internet or what is technically called the World Wide Web (www) was designed with globalization in mind. This has so much affected education that everyone desires to be seen on the global platform both the teacher and the learner even when the subject matter of contact and interaction is not trivial.

- **Dearth of music educators**

There is serious shortage of music educators in schools and institutions of learning. Compared to other areas of study like law, Medicine, Pharmacy and Engineering, one wonders how music has survived over the years or can survive the situation. This problem is not unconnected to our immediate society’s snobbery of music as an irrelevant course of study or area of specialization yet music and musicians are called upon in every event. Most Departments of music in Nigerian higher institutions are under-staffed yet students are expected to graduate with

experience in almost all aspects of musicology. When students are challenged with this, the only option is to switch to mobile learning for solace.

Conclusion

The gains of mobile learning (M-Learning) have been observed in this paper but the problems emanating from its practice has been found to be inimical to music pedagogy. Students have now lost interest in classroom learning and have happily embraced M-learning because of its accessibility, convenience, portability, cost-effectiveness, and the easy in facilitating distance learning. Although these advantages are commendable, however, mobile learning is fraught with such problems as poor stratification of objectives, poor curriculum management, lack of teacher-learner interaction, the problem of assessment and evaluation, inattention to exceptional learners, and promoting laziness and examination malpractice among students.

Recommendations

This work recommends that:

- Mobile learning platforms should have a professional regulatory body that regulates and standardizes the practice
- Music teachers both in schools and higher institutions of learning should sit up to the call of competency.
- Students and learners of all categories should be strictly guided towards the advantages of the rigours of classroom methodology in learning.
- The government and the society should encourage more people to enrol for music studies and professional music teacher training in order to curb the dearth of teachers.

- Every music teacher and educator should endeavour to make classroom music teaching interesting, fulfilling, and beneficial to the learners

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