

**AN EVALUATION OF THE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING OF ART AND MUSIC EDUCATION: THE CASE OF MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.****Joseph George Mupondi<sup>1</sup>****Givewell Munyaradzi<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1,2</sup>Great Zimbabwe University Curriculum Studies Department  
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***Abstract:** The development of education in Zimbabwe has gone under many phases since the colonial era. The study looked at the reforms designed to eliminate imbalances and inequalities in education. It addressed the problem of post 'o' level students who could not be absorbed into senior high school, colleges and the labour market. These post 'o' level students included those who did Art and Music. Data was collected from teachers, students and school administrators of selected schools in Masvingo district, through questionnaires, document analysis and interviews. The population sample comprised of two teachers per school, one administrator per school, ten students per school and five schools were selected in the district. It was found out that in some schools Art and Music do not have proper place on the school timetable. Schools do not have adequate resources. There is no dovetail between the Primary curriculum and secondary curriculum because many students who did Art and Music at Primary level fail to take the subject at secondary level, only to find it again in Colleges and Universities. The researchers recommend that all vocational technical education should be offered through curriculum designed by stakeholders that include commerce industry and relevant professional bodies.*

***Keywords:** vocational technical, Art and Music Education, Evaluation of Art, Evaluation of Music*

**Background to the study**

The development of education and training in Zimbabwe has undergone many phases since the colonial era and after the attainment of independence in 1980. Significant policy measures were taken at different phases which reflected the socio – political ideologies of the time. The colonial era was characterized by policies of racial discrimination in education and society. There was glaring inequalities in the provision of education and training. At the attainment of independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government embarked on a reform course designed to eliminate the imbalances and inequalities that existed during the colonial era in education and training. Education was democratized. The democratization policy ushered in expansive and extensive provision. Zvobgo (1986: 30) states that;

The attainment of independence in 1980 started a wide range of reforms in the Socio- economic, political and educational realms. The aim was to start a democratic and egalitarian society. Government strongly believed “Education not a privilege . . . and should meet the needs of every citizen and the nation”.

As such there was great expansion in both enrolment and number of primary and secondary schools. The major problem was that the curriculum was still British and academic in nature at the expense of vocational technical skills. Unprecedented expansion of access and provision was high. The expansion put pressure on human, financial and infrastructural resources as well as teaching and learning resources. The majority of the pupils who completed form IV could not be absorbed in senior high school, teachers' college, the training institutions, or the labor market. The majority of the pupils channeled out by Zimbabwean school post- independence did not have relevant practical training skills since the curriculum was mainly academic and theoretical. The government tried to redress the situation through a Memorandum of the Working Party of the Cabinet (September, 1985). It emphasized reform of educational policy. The reforms called among other things modification of F1 (Academic and considered superior) and F2 (Mainly practical and was designed for the less gifted students) into offering general education with compulsory technical practical component requiring each learner to do at least two technical subjects which are related to each developmental needs of the nation. Unfortunately, this was not implemented. There was also the problem of mismatch between employment world and what is taught in schools. A commission was set by President Robert G. Mugabe in 1998 to review the problems in the education and training sector in Zimbabwe. The commission was headed by renowned educationist and scholar Dr Nziramasanga. The commission recommended that steps should be taken to ensure that infrastructure be developed to get rid of "hot sitting" (Nziramasanga 1999). The commission further recommended that there should be a genuine paradigm shift from being examination driven curriculum to one that emphasizes experiential learning and develop desirable traits and competences (Nziramasanga 1999). As such this paradigm shift seem not have taken off many years after the Nziramasanga Commission's Report on Education and Training in 1999. Since 1985 to the present day little has been done as far as vocational-technical education approach is concerned, the reason being that of the economic downturn and lack of commitment of both government and stake holder in the education system. As a result this prompted the two researchers to carry out an evaluation of the vocational-technical education approach to the teaching of Art and Music in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Vocational – technical education enhances skills that are valued in global and local economic growth. Vocational- technical education is potentially one of the most important tools for national and regional development (UNESCO Report 1987). It is essential for developing young people's skills. The vocational- technical approach today has gained momentum elsewhere in the world.

According to the World Bank (2007) World Development Report (ii) "1.3 billion, are 15- 30 years old young people now live the developing world, the largest youth population in the history of the world in both absolute and relative numbers" (Aring and Corbitt, 1996, 114). In the developing world young people make up nearly half of the unemployed population. As such

developing countries such as Zimbabwe have very short time to create jobs before the youth dividend turns into a generation of unemployed adults. (Middleton, et al 1996). This is due to lack of skills training both in and outside school.

Vocational-technical education is one of the most important vehicles for developing essential skills in young people in and outside schools. These skills are important for employment and the nation's economic growth as already mentioned. Vocational –technical education plays an important role in preparing young people for a productive livelihood, which in turn leads to national economic growth. Internationally vocational- technical education is taken seriously for its role in 'the skilling of young people in and out of school' (Silatech, 2008). Since the mid 1990s vocational –technical education, internationally known as Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been gaining recognition and popularity along Technical Vocational Skills Develop (TVSD) in East Asia. This is because of the roles of the two approaches in the economic growth of Korea, China, India, Taiwan and Malaysia.

In developed countries vocational –technical TVET is designed in line with the national economic blueprint. Thus each country in the developed countries takes a different approach to vocational technical education. Middleton (1998) argues that most of their TVET or TVSD systems benefit from close communication and linkages with the private sector. That is the curriculum is designed by captains of industry and commerce in collaboration with educationists. There is substantial private sector investment in education, and there are industry wide skills standards. Here skills taught in schools or thereafter should be in line with technological advancement of the time and national manpower developmental needs to bolster national economic development.

There is also a strong collaborative process of curriculum development for learning at schools and workplaces. There is deep rooted education, industry trade associations relations. Aring et al (1996) points out those Northern European countries perceive the term vocational technical education differently from the Anglo-Saxon countries. The Anglo- Saxons are the British and their former colonies where the term has negative connotations.

According to MacMillan et al (1992) this negative point of view was transferred to most of the former British colonies including Zimbabwe. Most of these make up the developing world. Hence in most of former British colonies vocational –technical education has a negative social status. As a result, there is sometimes little or no collaboration between employers and education, industry and education. It has been noted that very few developing countries have a solid and organized private sector. This is opposite to the developed Northern Europe and the Eastern Asia perception of vocational – technical education from secondary level to tertiary. In Germany for example vocational means *berufsausbildung* which means completing your education for your profession. This means vocational –technical education has a high status and

is taken seriously because of its role in provision of skilled manpower for the countries' economies.

### **Vocational –Technical Approach a robust Curriculum Development Strategy for Economic Growth of Developing Countries**

In most developing countries there is no economic growth, this is largely attributed to lack of skills that are valued in global economies. As a result local industry does not grow. Good demand driven Technical –Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is one of the most important tools for skilling people in and out of school. Hence a vocational –technical curriculum should play a critical role in preparing young people for a productive livelihood. (<http://www.tvet-portal.net/index.php>) accessed on 25 February 2013.

Since the mid 1990s TVET and TVSD have been gaining significant popularity in East Asia particularly in China, India, S Korea and Taiwan. This is because of their roles in the economic development of these countries. In developing countries there are few if any intermediaries who can connect both education and employers effectively. There are also very few resources available to purchase and maintain up to date equipment for learning globally competitive skills. TVET is a robust vehicle for empowerment of young citizen because they would in possession of essential skills for economic production. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-> accessed on 25 February 2013.

USAID a non- governmental organization from the United States of America carried out a study in twenty developing and developed countries on best practice in workforce development (1995-19997). One of the countries studied was South Africa. The study had the following findings; There is often no economic growth strategy linked to vocational technical education. Curricular are often narrow or out of date. There are no skills standards that reflect a sector's current and future skills needs. This is the opposite of what happens in developed countries. According to USAID study on best workforce development (1997) TVET shared nine common characteristics which need to be taken into consideration in vocational –technical education curriculum development which are;

1. Leadership and accountability
2. Demand –driven curriculum design
3. Portability of skills
4. Continuous improvement
5. Open access
6. Public –private partnership
7. Sustainable financing
8. Replicability

9. Economic and social impact [http://www.silatech.com/arabic/media/pdf/silatech%](http://www.silatech.com/arabic/media/pdf/silatech%20130225.pdf) accessed on 25 February 2013.

Therefore the vocational –technical approach can be best illustrated by the South Korean economy.

South Korea restricted Japanese ownership of companies' shares to 49% which ensured that the intellectual capital remained in South Korea. South Korean schools and colleges were required to teach today and tomorrow's skills based on the country's economic growth export strategy. As such African countries need to align their economic development strategies with education at the same time forming strong public–private partnership which ensures sustainable financing for sustainable development. [http://www.silatech.com/arabic/media/pdf/silatech%](http://www.silatech.com/arabic/media/pdf/silatech%20130225.pdf)

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study sought to evaluate the extent to which the vocational-technical approach has taken off since its recommendation by the Nziramasanga Commission 1999 which was set by President Robert Mugabe to find out problems bedeviling Education and Training in Zimbabwe. The study paid particular attention to the availability of resources and the implementation stages of the curriculum. This is because for any curriculum to be successful its implementation should be supported by all stakeholders.

### **Statement of the problem**

Education and training have undergone many reforms before and after independence in Zimbabwe. Before independence in 1980 a dual education system existed. There was one system for Africans and the other for Europeans. The two systems were derived from the socio-political philosophy of racism and racial discrimination. This discrimination set up separate establishments. Segregation in education was legalized and rigorously enforced. It saw the establishment of separate schools for Europeans and Africans. The discrimination applied to students, the curriculum and its content, the provision of infrastructure and financial resources. At independence a new socio- political order emphasized a non –racial society, education was declared a human right for all citizens. The new policy saw great expansion which did put pressure on resources like infrastructure, teaching and learning as well as financial. As a result most of the post 'O' level students could not be absorbed into industry and commerce because the curriculum was too academic and theoretical (Nziramasanga 1999).

The Zimbabwean government in 1998 set up the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training. The commission recommended that general education at secondary level should be modified. There should be a compulsory technical component requiring each learner to do at least two technical subjects which are in line with economical development needs of the nation. The education system's philosophy to change after form two channeling; Applied

education (vocational-technical) and conventional education (Nziramasa, 1999). Most of the recommendations which include the vocationalisation of practical and technical subjects have not been implemented. This sluggish implementation has prompted the researchers to carry out this study

### **Research objectives**

The research was led by the following objectives;

1. To evaluate the extent to which the vocational technical approach has been utilized as an alternative pathway in the teaching of Art and Music in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe.
2. To establish the feasibility of vocational- technical education approach in Art and Music education after the Nziramasa Report of 1999.

### **Assumptions**

The research made the following assumptions;

The vocational-technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music enhances pupils' manipulative skills and competences which are valued in global and local economies.

Vocational- technical approach in the teaching of Art and Music has been well-received in secondary schools since it has the backing of the government.

After the Nziramasa Report of 1999 on Education and Training the Zimbabwe education is now more inclined towards Competence Based Education philosophy.

### **Research Methodology**

Research design is defined as a plan and structure of the investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions (Cooper, 2003). A qualitative paradigm was preferred. It allows the study of the things in their natural setting.

### **Population and sample**

#### **Population**

The population for this study is made up of thirty teachers, fifteen administrators and one hundred and sixty pupils. Best and Khan (1993:13) describes a population as “. . . any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common that are interest to the researcher.” The population group should give the researcher a generalization of the results of the study.

#### **Sample**

Babbie (1993) says a sample is a limited subset of the population being studied. The sample for this study comprise two teachers per subject per school; one administrator per school. The

sample also includes twenty students from each of the subjects under study per school .Five schools in Masvingo District were selected for this study.

### **Sampling Procedure**

Random sampling was used to come up with students who filled in questionnaires. The same technique was used to select students for interviews. Borg and Gall (1996) argue that randomization reduces the chances of research bias. Thus a draw was conducted by the researchers in order to come up with the students to be interviewed and fill in questionnaires.

Purposive sampling was used to select two teachers per subject per school and one administrator per school to be interviewed. Thus in this study purposive sampling was utilized because the researcher selects particular subjects to include because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory. That is “. . . sampling to ensure that characteristics in your study appear in total population” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:71-72). The same administrators and teachers’ documents were used for document analysis.

### **Data Collection and Instruments**

Borg and Gall (1993) say instruments are tools needed for collecting data from human subjects. They are used to obtain standardized information from all subjects in the sample. The instruments used in this study are;

1. Questionnaires which were filled in by twenty students per school and per subject.
2. Interviews were used to solicit information from teachers and administrators.
3. Document analysis was used in the analysis of the national and school syllabi, schemes-cum-plans for each teacher per subject, progress record books, school time table and other relevant documents.

### **Findings**

The study found out that vocational- technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music is an uphill task and is at grassroots level in Masvingo District secondary schools. The study found out that 65% of the schools did not have proper Art and Music studios. Only 35% of the secondary schools in the district have proper Art and Music studios. 60% of the heads indicated that vocational – technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music was almost impossible at present because of lack of funding and steep shortage of resources, equipment and technical support from the private sector. All the secondary school heads lamented at the lack of commitment of the government, professional boards and the private sector in the funding of education in general.

### **The Economic Situation and the Implementation of the Vocational – Technical Approach**

The study clearly revealed that schools not only in Masvingo District have no capacity to buy up to date expensive equipment , tools , instruments, books and textbooks required by Art and Music . This situation has been necessitated by the Zimbabwean economy down turn since the

end of the 1990s. As a result 80% of the heads said that practical fees charged by schools are too low to procure all the equipment, tools and instruments needed by these subjects. All the school heads admitted that Art and Music equipment and materials are too expensive; they regarded them as expensive subjects.

Nearly 85% of the teachers were of the opinion that the hard economic situation forces them to resort to areas of the syllabus which they are aware of, that is areas which have not changed. These are the areas of the syllabi whose content, methodologies, instrument equipment and tools have not changed after curriculum reviews. Teachers revealed that most of the school heads are seriously resisting the use of resource persons in the teaching of Art and Music. Teachers argue that resource persons are very important because they help in teaching new areas of the syllabus. The other information gathered from teachers' interviews show that in both Art and Music there are serious shortages of resources. 95% of the teachers are of the opinion that Art and Music syllabi are too wide. This, therefore force teachers as mentioned before to concentrate on few areas like *mbira* the hand piano a traditional instrument that is locally made. The new syllabus requires competence in technical manipulation and information technology which 80% of the subject teachers revealed they lacked. Nearly all the teachers interviewed are of the opinion that they need in- service training and workshops to keep them abreast with current Art and Music trends.

### **Shortage of Equipment and the School Administrators' Negative Attitude towards Art and Music**

One of the biggest impediments in the implementation of vocational –technical approach in the teaching of Art and Music is the negative attitude of most of school heads. 70% of the heads were of the opinion that the two subjects are too expensive. The heads still associate vocational - technical education with the colonial F1 and F2. F1 was the purely academic theoretic curriculum for Africans who were academically gifted. While F2 was for those less academically gifted and was practical in nature, this included carpentry, brickwork etc. The negative connotation was most likely transferred from the British point of view. They viewed practical manual work as inferior in comparison to white collar office work which was associated with the gentry in the rigid British class system (Middleton, 1993).

Information from pupils' questionnaires indicated that though there are syllabi changes in Art and Music, the skills taught are the same. In Art for example 90% of the students revealed that they are taught the same basic manipulative skills with very little variations from form one to 'O' level. These skills are, basic drawing in pencil, basic painting in watercolor and weaving. Vocational- technical education requires pupils to learn a lot of baseline which are geared towards a productive life. Nearly all the pupils agreed that their schools lacked up to date equipment and infrastructure which are in line global trends.



Documents such as the Art and Music old and new syllabi, schemes of work, textbooks, record books, school timetable and other relevant documents were analyzed to get an impression of what was, and what is in view of the vocational- technical approach. Document analysis was also carried out to evaluate the changes and innovations made post the Nziramasanga Report of 1999. An analysis of the syllabi and textbooks was done to give an insight into their responsiveness to the national economical needs and technological advancements. It was found that 60% of the secondary schools in the study are still using old Art and Music syllabi. The Nziramasanga Report Of (1999:312) posits that “the potential of art in developing all our lives is not recognized and its ability as an income generating profession is minimized. . .” Only 40% of the schools have the new syllabi. Teachers also indicated that there are no formal relations between the main school examination board ZIMSEC and most Music professional boards like ABRS, Zimbabwe College of Music. This is a serious problem in that there is no linkage and close communication between private sector and education. This creates a serious gap between what is taught in schools and industry wide skills standards. This implies that the new innovations and changes are partially being implemented.

## Discussion

It has been noted that vocational –technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music enhances skills that are valued in global and local economies. It is potentially one of the most important tools for developing young people’s skills a productive livelihood and economic growth of their countries (Aring, 2011). However, the vocational –technical is not fully taking place because of the economic down turn, lack of funding and steep shortage of resources and infrastructure.

Therefore the vocational-technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music in Masvingo District is partially implemented. Nkomo (1995:13) argues that, “. . . the implementation stage is where syllabi are actually used in schools.” In this study 40% of the schools have the new Art and Music syllabi while 60% are still using the old syllabi. Due to lack of commitment of stakeholders like the government and the society at large in supporting effective curriculum changes, schools put up a show when under pressure. This is true when one examines findings from document analysis pertaining to Music education It was found out that Music does have a proper place on the timetable. Again it is taught from form one to four, there is no A level Music. A gap is created when students are forced to do other subjects at ‘A’ level and continue with the subject at tertiary level. From the document analysis of Music it was also found out that only 55% of the schools in the study ensure that their students sit for public examinations in Music. 45% of the schools do not. This mainly due to the old British colonial legacy of the F1 and F2 system where practical subjects and anything to manual work was considered inferior. The other reason was the incompetence of the teachers to fully implement the new Music syllabus which is inclined towards Competence Based Music Education it emphasizes mastery of playing of nearly all major instruments and strike a balance between theory and practice. Therefore good demand

– driven vocational – technical is paramount in preparing young people for a productive livelihood.

### Conclusion

The study has shown that the vocational-technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music is an uphill task and is still at grassroots level in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. This is mainly due to the Zimbabwean economic down turn. Most school heads are resistant to new curriculum innovations and changes; they view Art, Music and other practical subjects as inferior and expensive. The vocational-technical approach in the teaching of Art and Music is hampered by poor funding, lack of resources, infrastructure, equipment and materials. Content of the two subjects has slightly changed. Only 40% of the schools under study have the new Art and Music syllabus whilst 60% are still using the old syllabus which is not in line with the Nziramasanga Report (1999) recommendations of vocationalisation of technical practical subjects in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

### Recommendations

- The government should involve other stakeholders and give them a chance in developing infrastructure and funding of education programmes.
- There should be close communication and linkages among the private sector , industry and the education system in developing industry –wide skills standards.
- A strong collaboration between employers and education is therefore imperative for a demand driven vocational-technical education derived from a collaborative process of curriculum development for learning at schools and workplaces. The curriculum blueprint should reflect the nation’s current and future skills needs which are globally competitive.
- Art and Music should be taught using the hands- on approach so that students develop the desired competencies and skills that make them fit for employment and further education.
- Most teachers need in –service training and workshop in order to appreciate and fully implement the new vocational- technical approach to the teaching of Art and Music.

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