UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND MUSICAL COMPETENCIES: A CASE STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION.

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A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MUSIC EDUCATION)

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Kwabla Eleagbe Amenyah, hereby declare that with the exception of references to other people's work, which have been duly cited, this is my own action research and that it has neither in whole nor in part been presented for any award in this university or elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date:.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis Project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: .....

Signature.....

Date:.....

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere thanks to my supervisors for taking their time to peruse my work.

Special thanks go to the Head of Department Mr. Obed Acquah and the Administrative staff for their inspiration and assistance that has contributed to the completion of this project within the stipulated time.

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DEDICATION

To my family for their support throughout this project.

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ABSTRACT

This project involved discovering the musical backgrounds of beginning music students of UEW. The goal was to show how their prior learning affects their musical abilities and their individual interests. All level 100 students' background was investigated using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using quantitative statistics and presented in tabular form containing the number of responses per item (frequency) and the percentage of each response via graphs. The findings indicated that respondents had prior knowledge in all forms of African music: art-composed, indigenous and popular music. After showing that music student's posses prior knowledge in all forms of African music, this research accentuates the connection(s) between prior knowledge and music abilities from students' perspectives. This was accomplished through a stratum that organizes musical competencies into instrumental and non-instrumental musical competencies. It was confirmed that prior knowledge appears to influence music students' musical competencies in more positive ways than otherwise in playing of musical instruments, composition, sound set-up, choir management, and dancing and music business. Engaging student's pre-existing knowledge or misperceptions offers music educators an efficient way to formally diagnose their students' baseline, which should then serve as the critical first step in the teaching/learning cycle of tertiary music classrooms in Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, many studies have been conducted on prior knowledge using schema as the underlying theory in many disciplines such as maths, sciences and especially reading. For example, Giroux (1986) in *–Mixed Pedagogic Modalities: The Potential for Increased Student Engagement and Success."* insists that students have –diverse readings, mediations, and behaviours" that affect their responses in particular educational contexts. He accentuates that educators need to be attentive to the –histories, dreams, and experiences" that students transport to the classroom and argues further that we should –interrogate the ways in which people create stories, memories, and narratives that posit a sense of determination and agency" (1986, 64).

To illustrate the importance of schema in the formulation of new understanding, Wragg (2001) *in "making connections: teacher's use of children's prior knowledge in whole class discourse"* makes mention of the teacher who thought her pupils know nothing about volcanoes but discovered that they had insight into —a greater knowledge" than she had expected. Wragg further explained that these pupils' prior learning only came to light after the teacher had asked the class to verbalize what they already know about volcanoes. Philosophically, Mercer (1995) supports this view and insists that education should –be a developmental process in which earlier experiences provide the foundations for making sense of later ones" (1995, p.33)

This and many studies have confirmed that learners make use of their prior learning to create new meaning. Consequently, these researchers have interpreted results to imply that prior learning really matters and have gone ahead to propose sets of methods to tap learner's prior knowledge. Nevertheless, discussions on issues of prior knowledge

have almost always focused on children and how they integrate past learning with new material. Additionally, research to diagnose the variance between prior knowledge and music education has not received the needed attention to enable Music Educators to successfully understand the frustrations that their students experience in their quest to create understanding out of new musical abstractions. This study therefore takes on a new road by examining views of fresh students on the links between their prior musical knowledge and their musical competencies in the context of tertiary music curricula.

1.1 Background to the Study

Even though it is widely held that the extent to which students will learn new content depends on factors such as skill of the teacher, the interest of the learner, and the complexity of the content, several studies have justified the relationship between background knowledge and achievement (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999: 1994: Alexander, Kulikowich, & Schulze, 1994).

Customarily researchers and theorists refer to what a person already knows about a topic as ~~–b~~background knowledge." At times, such prior knowledge facilitates learning by generating mental pegs that serve to anchor instructional concepts. What students will learn and how they will go about learning is influenced by the beliefs and conversely, one's musical background may also become a barrier in one's efforts to learn new skills and desirable attitudes. The acquisition of new content can be foiled if it conflicts with students' pre-existing misinformation. For example, a student may have acquired a poor fingering technique on the trumpet before entering school to study music. If this student should experience difficulties in adjusting to a better fingering pattern, a good knowledge of this student's prior learning will help the teacher to better understand the challenges of this learner thereby avoiding frustration on both sides which sometimes creates unnecessary tension.

As a musician/teacher at Faithworks Music School-a state registered private music school based in Accra, I teach students of all ages music theory, piano, guitar and voice. In my school, instrument learning is approached from two perspectives: sight-reading and playing by ear. In order to ensure that new students are well placed, I allocate some time to explore learners‘ prior musical experiences, interests and their personal ambitions with the use of discussions, and ―background" forms. The information I gather equips me to recommend the appropriate course module that will ensure that learner‘s expectations are met within the framework of the school‘s curriculum.

These reflections have prompted me to carry out this study using beginning level 100 students of the University of Education as my subjects. Their backgrounds will be investigated to see if any useful conclusions and or recommendations can be drawn.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Year after year, students from all over the country are admitted to study music at the tertiary level and private institutions. Presently, the music programme at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) is reputed for attracting the largest chunk of music candidates to study for music professions such as instrumentalists, music teachers, composers, performers and so on. From the word go, many freshers are involved in the music culture of the Department where they are seen playing keyboards, piano, percussions and other wind instruments. Hence it is obvious that these new students possess prior knowledge in their respective fields and these experiences are likely to serve as reference points for further musical study. Unfortunately, the structure of tertiary education does not make room for taking individual backgrounds into consideration hence there is a gap between what students already know and what they are taught in class. More also, though new students of UEW readily volunteer their musical skills, some of their prior knowledge/ skills may go unnoticed and remain under-developed.

It is expedient that both conscientious and sustained approaches are engaged to propel new learners to their fullest potentials however the issue of learner‘s prior musical knowledge has not received the attention of research works in the department.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Primarily, the study seeks to examine the associations between background knowledge and musical competencies of beginning music students.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate prior musical competencies of music students at UEW.
2. To verify student‘s perception of the relationship between prior knowledge and musical competencies in the music programmes at UEW.
3. To find out student‘s perception of the relationship between prior learning and interest in the music programmes at UEW
4. To explore the ways beginners create new musical understanding.

1.5 Research Questions

This research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the musical competencies of music students at UEW?
2. What are the perceptions of fresh students on the influence of prior learning on musical abilities in tertiary music education?
3. What are the perceptions of fresh students of UEW on the link between prior knowledge and student‘s interest?
4. What are the ways beginners create new musical meaning?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Primarily the findings of this work will assist music educators to make significant inputs into tertiary music education with respect to current issues concerning the education of music students.

There is the need for music departments to constantly observe for current trends and new developments in all aspects of music because society and music for that matter is in a constant state of change.

1.7. Delimitations

The study comprises only UEW where the researcher focused only on level 100 students of Bachelor of Arts Music Education, Bachelor of Music and Diploma in Music students.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Jean Paget‘s theory of schemas postulated in 1923 and supported by Jerome Bruner‘s theory of constructivism. He defined a schema as a ―cohesive, repeatable action sequence possessing component actions that are tightly interconnected and governed by a core-meaning‖ (McLeod, 2015). In other words a schema can be defined as a set of ―connected mental representations‖ of the world, which we utilize both to interpret new knowledge and to respond to situations. (McLeod, 2015).

1.8.1 Historical Review of Schema Theories

Early definitions of schema theory presented schemas as fixed, rigid structures (Schank & Abelson, 1977), but, as Kintsch (1998) noted, such strict definitions were quickly revised to include more loosely defined constructs.

Even though Bartlett and Piaget wrote profusely about schema, Kant (1929) is generally considered to be the first to talk about schemas as organizing structures that form a connecting link between how we see and perceive the world (Johnson, 1987). For Kant a schema stood between the external world and internal mental structures; a schema was a lens that both shaped and was shaped by experience. Bartlett (1932/1995) used the term schema and conducted experiments to hypothesize schemas as cultural constructs in memory, and this is the work most widely cited by schema theorists working in the cognitive era (Saito, 1996). Bartlett's research and writing give credence to schemas as more than in-the-head occurrence and provide a basis for thinking of them as patterns that expand beyond the knower into the social and cultural world (Saito, 1996, 2000).

Schema was also the central meditational construct in Jean Piaget's (1952) structural theory of the origins and development of cognition. For Piaget, development was interpreted as an ongoing dialectic in which the individual either assimilates new experience consistent with existing schemas or changes (i.e., accommodates) schemas to fit his or her experience. What is more, Piaget emphasized the embodied nature of schema formation by calling attention to the importance of sensory-motor schemata in an individual's early development.

In the last decade, many studies of schema-driven properties in music melody cognition have been introduced in the field of psychology and music education research. These studies have confirmed that a musician's memory is superior to a non-musician's, and a musician has an internalized appropriate musical schema (Ogawa, Kimura & Mito, 1996).

1.9 Constructivism-Theoretical Perspectives

Constructivism refers to the process by which human beings actively make sense out of the world around them to ―understand" (Wiske, 1998). In this vein, Duckworth, (1987) wants us to understand that ―meaning is not given to us in our encounters, but it is given by us, constructed by us, each in our own way, according to how our understanding is currently organized."

Despite the fact that the particulars of constructivist- focused learning theory are often contested, it is widely agreed that the essence of constructivism is that learners actively create their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences with respect to their prior knowledge (Fosnot, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995).

This essence relies on an epistemology that lays emphasis on the conception that while reality may exist detached from experience, it can only be perceived through experience, resulting in a ―personally unique reality" (Geer & Rudge, 2002). Von Glasersfeld (1990) advanced three vital epistemological ideologies of constructivism to which a fourth has been added in light of recent writings.

1. Knowledge is not passively accumulated, rather, is the product of active cognizing by the individual;
2. Cognition is an adaptive process that works to make an individual's behavior more viable given a particular environment;
3. Cognition organizes and makes meaning of one's experience, and is not a process to render an accurate representation of reality; and
4. Knowing has roots in both biological/neurological construction, and social,
5. cultural, and language based interactions (Dewey, 1980; Garrison, 1998).

Thus constructivism glorifies the learner's active role in the personal construction of knowledge and the significance of experience (both individual and social) in this knowledge creation process.

Constructivists equally affirm that the knowledge created will vary in its degree of validity as a legitimate representation of reality (Geer & Rudge, 2002). These four basic tenets provide the framework for basic principles of the teaching, learning, and knowing process as described by constructivism. When any of these ideologies are emphasized differently, it gives birth to a variety of types of constructivism (Geer & Rudge, 2002).

Notwithstanding the fact that the origins of constructivism are believed to date back to the time of Socrates, Gruber and Voneche (1977) also state that the term constructivism most probably is derived from Piaget‘s –constructivist” views (1967), as well as from Bruner‘s (1996) –constructivist” account of discovery learning.

Jerome Bruner, an American Psychologist, in his theoretical composition dubbed –the act of discovery” theorized in 1961, emphasized that learning is a lively process whereby learners rely on their current/past knowledge to enact new ideas or principles. According to Brunner, the end result of cognitive development is thinking. He believes that the intelligent mind creates from experience "generic coding systems that permit one to go beyond the data to new and possibly fruitful predictions" (Bruner, 1957, p. 234).

Lester and Onore (1990) share similar views when they proposed that authentic learning or change does not comes from turning a blind eye to all prior learning in order to re-learn, but "from questioning or reassessing our existing beliefs about the world" (p. 41):

Change can come about through nursing experiences that present and personify alternative systems of beliefs and attempting to locate a place for new experiences to harmonize with previously held beliefs (p. 41).

Learning is not passive. Instead learning is an active process in which learners ―negotiate their understanding" in the wake of what they encounter in the current learning situation. If what learners encounter is not at par with their current understanding, their current knowledge can be altered in order to accommodate new experience. Thus learners cannot be passive and they remain active throughout this process. (Amineh & Davatgari 2015).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to facilitate learning, one of the cardinal principles instructors employ is understanding students‘ prior knowledge which has been acquired through formal and informal experiences (Gee, 2012). Activating prior knowledge about a topic offers students with a ―hook" to hang the new material in their mental memory system and is the essential building block of content and skill knowledge (Campbell & Campbell 2006). In the literature, the term prior knowledge is often used interchangeably with background knowledge. Here, the terms are used synonymously since they mean basically the same thing.

This literature review discusses the importance of prior knowledge and reviews research on student‘s academic performance, interest, transition and awareness of diversity of student backgrounds. It is interesting to consider how researchers define the concept. Some simply define prior knowledge as what a person already knows about the content (Marzano, 2004; Stevens, 1980) while others have more complex definitions. For example, Biemans and Simons (1996) conceive of prior knowledge as ―all knowledge learners have when entering a learning environment that is potentially relevant for acquiring new knowledge (p. 6). Schallert (1992) goes further by asserting that a person‘s prior knowledge is a collection of ―abstracted residue" that has been formed from all of life‘s experiences.

Another helpful perspective of background knowledge is by Hailikari, Katajavuori & Yianne (2007) who focused attention on the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge. According to these three Science Scholars, at the lowest level, prior knowledge may consist of declarative knowledge, which is the knowledge of facts and meanings that a student is able to remember or reproduce. This type of declarative

knowledge is often referred to as ―knowing about" or surface learning (Biggs 2003). Declarative knowledge can also be described as rote learning or ―knowledge-telling" which may include many facts and details that do not form an integrated whole (Biggs 2003). Students who have declarative knowledge are able to answer fairly simple reproduction tasks that do not require an ability to integrate or apply knowledge (Dochy, 1992). Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, is characterised by an ability to integrate knowledge and understand relations between concepts and, at the highest level, apply this knowledge to problem-solving. It is often referred to as ―knowing how" and is closely related to higher-order cognitive skills.

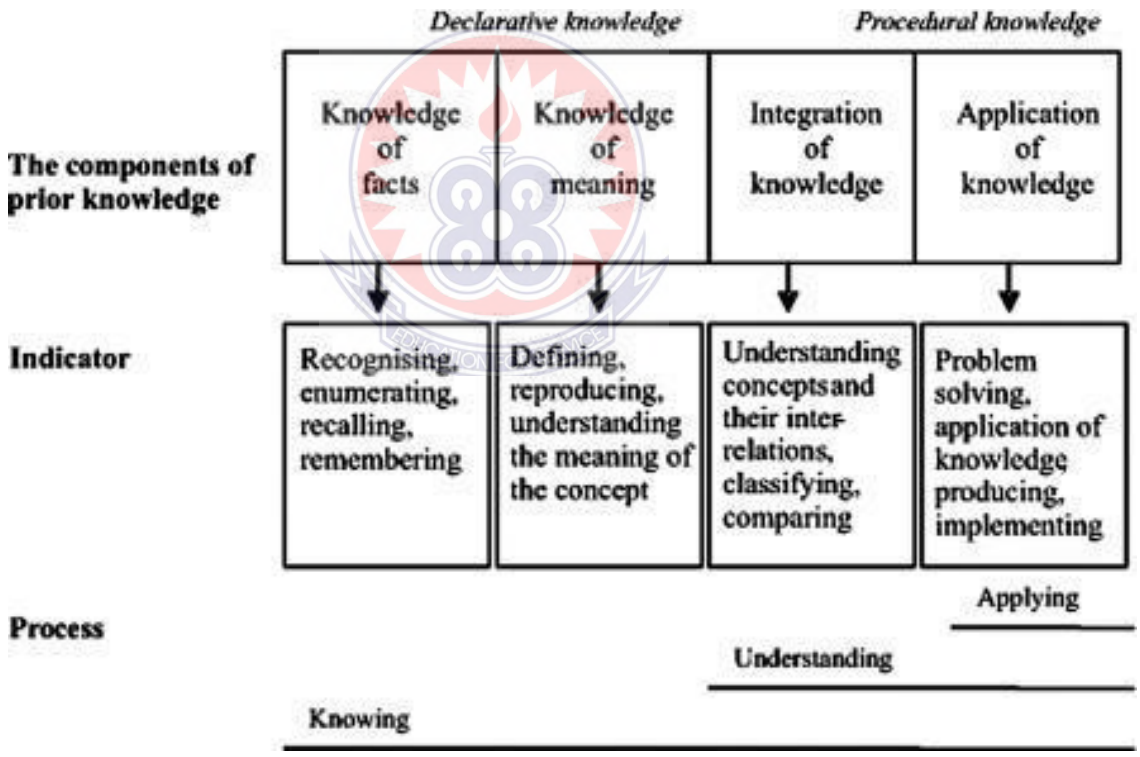

Figure 1: Model of Prior Knowledge

The model of prior knowledge. (Copyright 2007. Hailikari, Nevgi & Lindblom-Ylänne.)

The State of Queensland's Department of Education, Australia (2002) refers to "high connection" and "low connection" learning. High connection learning provides students the opportunity to associate their prior information to the topics, skills, and competencies tackled in the classroom. By contrast, low connection learning presents new information deprived of any direct or explicit exploration of students' background knowledge. Queensland educators are encouraged to teach efficiently by harnessing student background knowledge.

The Australian example is noteworthy. Extensive research has confirmed the significant role prior knowledge plays in students' academic achievement. (Educational Research Service, 2006; Marzano, Gaddy & Dean, 2000; Smith, Lee, & Newmann, 2001). Prior to this affirmation, Tobias (1994) declares that background knowledge has long been acclaimed the most important factor influencing learning and student achievement. On this Dresel et al (1998) affirm that the amount and quality of prior knowledge positively influences both knowledge acquisition and the capacity to apply higher order cognitive problem-solving skills. Campbell (2008) goes further by stressing that these connections are necessary because students confront new information every day. They must integrate the new material into their existing knowledge, construct new understandings, and revise current beliefs or theories as needed. Students who lack adequate prior knowledge or are not able to activate what they know often struggle to progress in a subject area or school itself (Campbell & Campbell, 2008).

Before analyzing the results from research works, it should be explained that there are two principal classroom methods to functioning with background knowledge. Firstly, by tapping or activating pre-existing knowledge while the second

approach is that of constructing or developing fresh background knowledge. (Campbell & Campbell 2008).

In the first study published in the 2010s, Priebe, Keenan, and Miller (2012) use an expository text about social studies to investigate ―the relationship between oral reading accuracy and comprehension" (p. 136) in order to determine the different types of errors that might predict reading comprehension. Participating in this study were 60 fourth grade students: 30 in the prior knowledge group and 30 in the non-prior knowledge group. Previous reading scores were used to classify readers as ―poor" or ―good" (p. 137). Researchers used a ―263-word expository passage, titled ―Amelia Earhart" (p. 138) taken from the Qualitative Reading Inventory. Before each participant read the passage, the examiner asked ―Who is Amelia Earhart?" (p. 138) to assess participants' prior knowledge on the topic.

Next, participants orally read the passage, which was recorded for measurement of ―rate and accuracy" (p. 138). Participants were then asked to recall the passage. Priebe, Keenan, and Miller calculated oral reading errors such as ―substitutions, omissions, insertions, repetitions, and skipped lines" (p. 139). An ―analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted" (p. 140) with independent variables of reading ability and prior knowledge and dependent variables of the ―total amount of idea units recalled" (p. 140). Results indicated poor readers that had prior knowledge on the topic recalled more items from the passage than poor readers with no prior knowledge.

Researchers have recommended simple techniques for tapping prior knowledge. Several meta-analyses (Marzano, 1998; Pressley, 1992; Strangman & Hall, 2004) reveal that simply asking students what they know about a topic before reading or instruction can raise achievement.

Likewise in math and science, research has demonstrated that asking students questions about key concepts and/or clarifying them before teaching the content increases achievement. (Fuson, Kalchman, & Bransford, 2005; King, 1992). But merely asking for verbal responses, as proof of prior knowledge can be quite unsatisfactory to say the least hence there is the need for a more comprehensive work plan to this end.

Consequently, Lin and Huang (2012) (A Fuzzy-based Prior Knowledge Diagnostic Model with Multiple Attribute Evaluation) revealed that previous works on prior knowledge assessment have only presented a prior knowledge model where a score is given a single attribute.

Despite the fact that this model is in itself an improvement over the conventional model where an overall score is given for each student, Lin and Huang believe that this approach contained two shortcomings: inability to highlight student's specific weaknesses and that some attributes may require "multiple attributes" for effective diagnosis. In this vein, they went on further to propose a model that takes these issues into account with the hope that learner's prior knowledge can be tapped more efficiently for a progressive classroom intercourse.

Many studies suggest that mathematics instruction should build on students' existing knowledge along with teaching computational algorithms (Ball, 1993; Carpenter, Fennema, and Franke, 1996). This is because students often possess relevant information that can assist them in mastering new content. (Wenden, 2015)

A case in point is that many children have informal methods for working with math in their everyday lives. Such knowledge can be engaged when the formal symbol systems are taught. Younger students might explain how they know the number of classmates stepping on and off a school bus. Older youth can be asked about financial approaches to buying a car. For those struggling with math using

student think out loud and explicit instruction have been shown to enhance background knowledge (Education Research Service, 2007; Gersten & Clark, 2007). It is also important that teachers teach and ask their students to use the language of mathematics and the actual vocabulary encountered in the classroom and text.

Issues concerning the background and transition from pre-tertiary to tertiary study for music students have not been the focus of many researchers, however, research centred on the secondary-school sector is particularly relevant in terms of curriculum design and student preparation. Dr. Graham McPhail, lecturer in Critical Studies in Education at Auckland University on knowledge acquisition at the secondary-school level, has written extensively about on-going music curriculum restructuring that has led to substantial expansion in terms of knowledge structures, content, and specification (McPhail 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

Basically, McPhail believes that *The New Zealand Curriculum* 5 seems to support knowers over knowledge and the regionalised adaptable structure results in permitting ―teachers to avoid assessing, and presumably teaching, areas that their students may find less relevant or more difficult" (2012b). He claims that Universities _have no choice but to respond to curriculum changes as students with a lack of traditional knowledge but new and varied skills undertake tertiary study' (2012b).

Jan Parker, for example, believes in regard to successful transitions that it is the universities that have the responsibility to bridge gaps; the responsibility, she insists, does not lie with the individual. The focus, therefore, shifts to examining curricula, assessment practices, and teaching methodologies in order to consider the extent to which they impede or facilitate student access (2003, 63). Access to higher education, she argues, is _an issue of institutional and systematic transformation rather than individual remediation' (ibid.).

The following are examples of work that has been undertaken educational research that reflect the role of background knowledge in new learning situations and on the importance of examining the associations of prior learning and new information.

Renshaw identifies key issues and larger pedagogical initiatives that need to be negotiated within the constraints of organisational concerns and priorities. Among the questions he asks of any organisation focused on change and preparing for the future are: ―How far is the training sector reappraising its patterns of organization and the scope and diversity of its courses in order to respond to the wide range of musical genres and artistic practices within the music industry? Do the content of courses and the environment in which Students learn produce the kind of musicians who will be able to thrive and adapt within a multi-stranded industry? Does the scope and diversity of courses offered respond to the wide range of musical genres and artistic practice within the music industry?" (2002, p22).

Burland and Pitts make three observations that give credence to the present topic. Firstly, they find that lecturers typically in general have out-dated assumptions about students' prior learning. Secondly, they stress that students' attitudes to learning are inevitably shaped both academically and socially by their school experiences and their expectations of university life. Lastly, they note that consistency of academic and musical skills cannot be assumed across a given cohort and argue that there is a responsibility for lecturers, with support from their institutions, to address this (Burland & Pitts 2007, 290-295).

Anthony Cook and Janet Lecky support these views and argue that it is important that ―university staff have an informed view of the diversity in the backgrounds, needs and aspirations of the students they teach" (1999, 158). Cook and

Leckey find that students‘ study habits are formed in secondary school and persist to the end of first semester of university life. Such a conclusion indicates that students are not bridging the gap between school and university quickly and effectively. To take it a little further, Lowe and Cook (2003) expand on this research and show that for a sizable proportion of the student population (20-30%) there is a considerable transitional challenge into higher education and these students experience consistent academic and personal problems increasing the likelihood of underperformance and/or withdrawal. Furthermore, they remark that there is the necessity for ―greater awareness among academic staff of the qualities and skills which new students bring to their university studies as well as explicit statements of those qualities and skills which are desirable to assist new university students to study effectively‖ (Cook & Lecky 1999, 170).

2.1. Issues of Culture, Ethnicity, and Gender

> Education is as much about being inculcated with the ways of the 'culture of power' as it is about learning to read, count, and think critically (Carter 2005, p. 47).

The sociologist Carter gives more vent to this quote by explaining that schools are not just institutions for teaching and learning but are also naturally channels where teachers transmit cultural knowledge to its students.

This view is supported by Wenden who generalizes that many educational ideals with regards to teaching and learning practices and student needs are influenced by matters such as culture, class, ethnicity, and gender. (Wenden 2015)

In this, Giroux (2010) reflects on the ―overarching concepts of power relationships and agency‖ when he remarks that educators, asserting either radical or conservative ideologies, can be apathetic to democratic processes and the ways in

which these processes are ~~–m~~anaged and negotiated by students in educational environments" (Wenden p. 6).

Similarly, Rasminsky in ~~–t~~he culture of School," accentuates the transmission of a dominant Europe-American culture by teachers into the educational environment to the detriment of other collectivist cultures. Under the heading ~~–d~~econtextualized learning", he gives an example of the practice where teachers focus on abstract concepts, ~~–i~~solation of problems and attitudes like the shell, white, and yolk of an egg" and give much attention to words and facts whereas collectivist cultures like African-Americans attempt to understand the whole meaning; and not segmented pieces of it (Rasminsky, 2009).

In the same vein, Giroux calls for educators to be sensitive to the experiences of students who are ~~–s~~ilenced by the dominant culture of schooling" because he believes educators generally fail, ~~–t~~o engage the politics of student voice and representation – the forms of narrative and dialogue around which students make sense of their lives and schools". He emphasizes that such indifference is ~~–a~~t odds with the notion of human agency" and further they represent ~~–a~~ serious theoretical and political failing on the part of educators" (1986, 48).

Finally, he asks educators to be aware of how power, dependence, and social inequality enable and limit students in terms of class, race, and gender (1986, 64-5). Likewise , Paulo Freire condemns the ~~–b~~anking concept" of education where students are treated as ~~–e~~mpty vessels" into which new knowledge can be deposited like banks and cautions educators against ignoring cultural and creative knowledge in an effort to fill their ~~–e~~mpty vessels" with deposited knowledge that is, at best, expressions of a dominant persuasion (1985, 30).

Still other studies substantiate that many teachers fail to communicate effectively with students from diverse backgrounds; typical and dogmatic instructional procedures often infringe on the behaviour norms of these students' home cultures (Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1988). Furthermore, teachers may hold low expectations for students of minority backgrounds and thus fail to present them with ―challenging and interesting lessons" (Shore, 2008 p.24).

In this context and more recently, specific learning and teaching strategies have been implemented to provide more diverse opportunities for students. There is evidence that certain strategies, for example those involving maintaining high standards for all ethnically diverse students, understanding of students' home culture, emphasis on aural learning methods, group work, and more self-directed learning, lead to increased academic achievement and more varied opportunities for students from different classes and cultures. Green asserts that students with such opportunities are more likely to succeed at all educational levels (Green 2012, 212).

Research also reveals that schools tend to be biased against students of diverse backgrounds through assessments that do not value their home language and through the use of teaching strategies that fail to build on the potentials of their culture or home languages (Garcia & Pearson, 1991; Nieto, 2004). For example, Garth-McCullough (2008) conducted a mixed method study using an expository text about social studies to investigate ―the relationship between cultural orientation of literature and reading comprehension" (p. 1) of African American students. Garth-McCullough specifically analyzes the impact of students' prior knowledge and comprehension. Participants included ―117 eighth grade African American" (p. 9) students classified as ―low income" (p. 9). Participants first completed a ―reading behaviour survey" (p. 10)

and prior knowledge test that assessed participants ‗understanding of the texts' cultural and general content" (p. 10).

Over ‗three subsequent sessions" (p. 10), participants read six short stories. Each story represented a different culture: ‗African America, Chinese America, and European American" (p. 10). After reading each short story, participants completed a multiple choice reading comprehension test. Lastly, participants completed a ‗short post-survey" (p. 11) consisting of questions about ‗interest level, text difficulty, and familiarity" (p. 11).

Results showed that participants' ‗level of culturally bound prior knowledge of the African American stories content significantly influenced their reading comprehension performance" (p. 20). Therefore, Garth-McCullough concludes that prior knowledge plays a significant role in successful reading comprehension. These findings provide teachers with support for integrating strategies to activate students' prior knowledge when teaching a new topic or concept.

Just like stereotyping of any kind, the attribution of gender with musical instruments can decrease desirable behaviour and by extension the opportunities of an individual (Abeles and Porter, 1978). The two researchers maintain that by sex-stereotyping musical instruments, one inadvertently narrows the musical experiences accessible to male musicians and their female counterparts as well. They contend that this association is the predominant factor responsible for the reason why men dominate band programs while orchestra programmes are the preserve of females.

To substantiate these claims, Abeles and Porter considered the views of music students and non-music students about their perception of the gender of arbitrarily selected pairs of instruments. The results showed that drums, trombone and trumpets were deemed to be the most masculine whereas the most feminine instruments were

the flute, violin, and clarinet. They also found out that the cello and saxophone was thought to be in the middle.

In the same study, the two scholars asked adults to also select musical instrument for their assumed daughter or son by pairing them with instruments from a list of eight musical instruments of cello, clarinet, drums, flute, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, and violin. The findings above were similar to the responses of the music students and the non-music students as follows cello, clarinet, flute for a daughter then trombone, trumpet and drums for a son.

More also if the institutional emphasis is on re-organizing rather than reconsidering curriculum content, then, as Giroux comments, ~~n~~ot only do the students bear the sole responsibility for course failure, but also there is little room for questioning the ways in which administrators and teachers actually create and sustain the problems they attribute to students" (1986, p. 59).

Spates (2006) in Culturally Responsive Teaching—Preacher Style, places emphasis on the need for educators to dialogue with students and make efforts to gain the trust of their parents to enable us to understand the cultural traditions that students are coming from thereby ensuring that classroom teaching is culturally relevant. Spates sums up by using African American children as an example as follows:

> African American children tend to prefer to learn in cooperation with others, as opposed to independently. Teachers must become knowledgeable of the cultures represented in their classrooms and present lessons in ways that reflects communicating and learning that is familiar to the students. p4.

Underlying this, and fundamental to exploring the narratives of students and educators, is a need to understand how students and educators understand their teaching and learning environments.

2.2 The Classroom Environment

New content can be overwhelming and challenging for a learner. Teachers can help their learners make the transition from the unknown by tapping learners‘ prior knowledge. Research indicates that we can jump-start learning by gaining access to pre-existing attitudes, experiences, and knowledge and bridging the gap between what is being taught and what is already known. For example Falsario, Muyong, & Nuevaespaña, (2014) find that classroom climate influences student achievement, their self-esteem and participation in lessons.

Ambrose and colleagues (2010) define classroom climate as the ―intellectual, social, emotional, and physical environments in which our students learn" (p.170). Classroom climate is having an environment where students feel safe, nurtured, and intellectually motivated by the use of strategies that ensure that student learning is enhanced (Nuevaespaña et al, 2014). Despite the fact that there is no specific definition of what makes up a negative classroom climate, Nuevaespaña et al loosely describe a negative classroom environment as one in which students feel uncomfortable, whether physically, emotionally, or academically, for any reason.

To ameliorate such failings Zeichner (1992) has summarized the extensive literature that describes successful teaching approaches for diverse populations. From his review, he distilled 12 key elements for effective teaching for ethnic- and language-minority students.

1. Teachers have a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities.
2. Teachers communicate high expectations for the success of all students and a belief that all students can succeed.
3. Teachers are personally committed to achieving equity for all students and believe that they are capable of making a difference in their students' learning.

4. Teachers have developed a bond with their students and cease seeing their students as "the other."
5. Schools provide an academically challenging curriculum that includes attention to the development of higher-level cognitive skills.
6. Instruction focuses on students' creation of meaning about content in an interactive and collaborative learning environment.
7. Teachers help students see learning tasks as meaningful.
8. Curricula include the contributions and perspectives of the different ethno cultural groups that compose the society.
9. Teachers provide a "scaffolding" that links the academically challenging curriculum to the cultural resources that students bring to school.
10. Teachers explicitly teach students the culture of the school and seek to maintain students' sense of ethno cultural pride and identity.
11. Community members and parents or guardians are encouraged to become involved in students' education and are given a significant voice in making important school decisions related to programs (such as resources and staffing).
12. Teachers are involved in political struggles outside the classroom that are aimed at achieving a more just and humane society.

2.2.1 The Constructivist Pedagogy

> ~~–~~Successful teaching is like a construction site - it is a construction site – on which students build on what they already know." (Biggs 1999, p 72).

Constructivism is a theory of learning, not a theory of teaching (Fosnot, 1996; Richardson, 2003). For this reason, even though there is an enormous body of literature on constructivism, the elements of constructivist teaching are not known

(Richardson, 2003). Constructivist teaching theory which is built on constructivist learning theory is a set of prescriptions that defy the transmission or behaviourist paradigms promoted in many education programs. Constructivist learning models include, but not limited to, experiential learning, self- directed learning, discovery learning, inquiry training, problem-based learning, and reflective practice as examples (Gillani, 2003; McLeod, 2003; Slavin, 2000).

Cognitive constructivists focus attention on accurate mental constructions of reality. Radical constructivists lay emphasis on the construction of a sound experiential reality while social constructivists stress on the construction of an agreed-upon, socially constructed reality. The question to ponder over is whether there is room for common pedagogy (Doolittle, 2002).

Across all the three types of constructivism (cognitive, radical and social) both theorists and practical constructivists agree that eight factors are essential in constructivist pedagogy (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Steffe & Gale, 1995). Before these principles are discussed, it should be noted, nonetheless, that these principles are not entirely constructivist in nature. Without doubt, all of these principles have been anticipated by other theorists at various times. What makes this list "constructivist" is the assemblage of these specific principles and the rationale for their inclusion. The basic assumptions and principles of the constructivist view of learning can be summarized as follows:

- Learning is an active process.
- Learning is an adaptive activity.
- Learning is situated in the context in which it occurs.
- Knowledge is not innate, passively absorbed, or invented, but rather constructed by the learner.

- All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic.
- Learning is basically a process of making sense of the world.
- Experience and prior understanding play a role in learning.
- Social interaction plays a role in learning.
- Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve. (Boethel and Dimock, 2000; Fox, 2001).

Fosnot (1996) suggests that several general principles of the constructivist view of learning can be applied to educational practices.

- Learning is not the result of development; but rather it is development itself. Hence, it requires innovation and self-organization on the part of the learner. It is necessary that learners are allowed by teachers to raise their own questions, fabricate their own hypotheses and models as possibilities, and test them for viability.
- The state of disequilibrium facilitates learning. "Errors" should be perceived as a result of learners' conceptions and therefore should not be minimized or avoided. Challenging, open-ended investigations in pragmatic, meaningful contexts will allow learners to explore and produce many alternatives, whether to affirm or contradict them. Contradictions, in particular, need to be clarified, explored, and discussed.
- Reflective abstraction is regarded as the driving force of learning. Humans, as meaning-makers, seek to organize and generalize over experiences in representative form. Reflection through journals, representation in multi-symbolic form, or linkages made across experiences or strategies may improve reflective abstraction.

- Dialogue within a community brings about further thinking. The classroom should be viewed as a community of discourse engaged in activity, reflection, and dialogue. Learners (rather than teachers) are responsible for defending, proving, justifying, and communicating their ideas to the classroom community.
- Learning proceeds toward building structures. As learners struggle to make meanings, they assume progressive structural changes in viewpoints. These learner-constructed, central-organizing ideas can be general across experiences, and they often require undoing or reorganizing earlier conceptions. This process continues throughout development.

The theory of Constructivism requires that we reflect on all aspects of the teaching in which we engage; for just as we are educators, we are as well learners ourselves. It is therefore expedient on our part to examine the way we plan our use of external standards, the materials we use, the environment in our classroom, our own attitudes and expectations, and especially, the needs of our students, be they children or teachers (Sparks, 1994).

The issue of a congenial classroom environment has received the attention of many researches over the past decade. For example, McPalm (2005) recommends the need to incorporate children‘s playground pedagogies in the classroom in order to bridge the gap between classroom and playground methods of teaching and learning. This will ensure a holistic approach to teaching and learning that is natural to the learner and at the same time new to the educator; and not vice-versa.

McPalm prompts us that children have their own ways or approach to learning through observing and doing. This ―on the job" learning is convenient in closing the gap between gaining new knowledge and its application. As a result, they leave the

playground with the ability to reproduce (to an extent) what they have seen and heard from their peers. They do not leave with imaginary concepts and theories that are yet to be understood or analysed.

Furthermore, the playground gives the child the opportunity to connect the mind to the body in ways that are not found in the classroom culture. This view is supported by Campbell (1998) who suggests that children are required to sit still in the classroom meanwhile they are used to making body movements to songs on the playground. It is not difficult to realise that children engage in at least three activities at a time when they participate in musical play-games; thus, they sing, move to the song as they make time-bound observations. No one should be surprised if pupils lose interest in the subject when the classroom pedagogy is dolefully dissociated from what they are familiar with. Accordingly, McPalm (2004) echoed the need for –creative" incorporation of playground pedagogies into formal classroom music teaching and learning in order to bridge this gap that exists between the indigenous and the contemporary.

2.3 Training of Musicians in African Society

The training of the African child includes music education, which serves as a tool for preparing the African for life. (Ekueme L.1974). Hence music begins at home and is present in all the events of the life cycle. For example, the Idoma, and Ekoi tribes in Southern Nigeria perform both birth rites and puberty rites with music while the Binis sing death songs to mourn the departure of loved ones Agordoh (1994). On how African indigenous music is taught in typical African societies, Agordoh in Studies in African Music shares that African children, comprising the talented ones, learn through –slow absorption and active participation" where they have to depend on their senses to decode musical stimuli. Even though Agordoh bemoans the lack of

formal institutions to train Africans in their own form of music, he underscores the role of African society in ensuring that even ―technical" elements are mastered through ―imitative experience and participation" (1994, 30). This goes to say that demonstrations are natural teaching methods for the growing African child who learns their traditional music through the medium of observations and imitations under the patient supervision of many experienced adults who are themselves performers.

This framework of learning is unfortunately tagged ―informal" and is generally perceived to be inferior to institutionalized forms of learning (formal) in all respects (Mapaya, 2016). In an article dubbed, University-*Based Music Training and Current South African Musical Praxis: Notes and Tones* Mapaya captures the contradiction between traditional approaches to music education with those affected in formal teaching as follows:

Whereas written notation is at the heart of formal university-based music education, most Africans, and indeed many other societies acquire music-making skills aurally, orally; and through participation in the many rituals and socialisation processes commonly considered ―informal." The transition from the so-called ―traditional" or ―informal" to the supposed ―formal" music training paradigms, especially at university level, has, for most black South Africans, been a relatively new experience, fraught with challenges. It is widely known that the tradition of music education, including the accompanying repertoire, is gravely foreign.

The above remark by Mapaya reminds us of post-colonial days where many African scholars called for the ―africanization" of the colonial-inherited educational system. On this issue, Akrofi and Flolu (2007) affirm that, ―no African country south of the Sahara can boast of a music education system which is uniquely African and which fulfils its national aspirations." Mapaya shares a similar view thus:

> University-based music curriculum designs are never intended for an African or the African environment. African ways of acquiring and circulating music-making knowledge and skills for that matter hardly feature in or inform university curricula.

The works of these scholars cited above have focused attention on the contribution of African societies to the musical encounters that shape the musicality of African students. This venture is necessary because it has assisted this study to throw light on the traditional culture that gives birth to music students whose prior knowledge will either be developed, partially developed or ignored during their music study at UEW.

2.4 Assessing Background Knowledge

It is of importance that educators find out what students already know about a topic, as this helps to ascertain the range of background in any one class. Even though many meta-analyses (Marzano, 1998; Pressley, 1992; Strangman & Hall, 2004) show that simply asking learners about what they already know about a topic prior to reading a passage, or an instruction can boost achievement, more specific strategies have been recommended to guarantee its success. As a result, there are techniques educators deploy to assess the individual‘s prior knowledge and get a general impression about how much the entire class knows about a topic.

At this point are enumerated a handful of strategies for assessing background knowledge by taking a glance at strategies by Lewis and Thompson (2010) and Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett and others (2010). In their book *“How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smarter Teaching”*, Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett et al discuss how faculty can estimate the extent and nature of students‘ prior knowledge. These strategies include:

- Dialogue with colleagues (teacher to teacher); here one teacher talks to other teachers to find out what has been taught previously to students.
- Low-stake assignments or quiz; with this method student‘s prior knowledge are assessed using quizzes, essays and so on before a new topic is introduced.
- Self –assessment of prior knowledge; students are encouraged to rate their prior learning by answering anonymous questions.

Apart from these strategies, Lewis and Thompson in a compilation captioned *–Activating Strategies for Use in the Classroom”* grouped activating strategies into written and non-written strategies. According to the two, written strategies included written conversations, KWL, 3-2-1, Questions to the teacher, Admit/Entrance Ticket, Acrostics and Carousel Brainstorming.

Other methods under written strategies comprised Activating Gist/Word Association, Journals, Anticipation Guide, Think-Pair-Write, Snowball Fights and Word Splash.

Non- written activating methods were equally in their numbers: Quick Talk, Charades, Stand the Line, Kinesthetic Tic- Tac- Toe, Photo Sort, Video Clips and Illustrations.

2.5 Learners Interest

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. Confucius 551-479 BC. This quote by Confucius provides evidence that, even in early times, there was an acknowledgement of the existence of different learning preferences among people. A good match between students‘ learning preferences and instructor‘s teaching style has been demonstrated to have positive effect on student's performance (Harb & El-Shaarawi, 2006). According to Reid (1995), learning preference refers to a person‘s —natural, habitual and preferred way” of assimilating new information.

This then suggests that individuals vary with respect to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them to be successful in their efforts to create new concepts. Scholars who campaign for the learning-preferences approach to learning, readily agree that effective instruction can only be successful if the learner's learning preferences are perused and the instruction is tailored accordingly (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008).

Indeed, Omrod (2008) reports that some students seem to learn better when information is presented through words (verbal learners), whereas others seem to learn better when it is presented in the form of pictures (visual learners). It is thus evident in a class where only one instructional method is engaged, there is a strong possibility that a number of students will find the learning environment less optimal and this could affect their academic performance.

Felder (1993) established that students have a better recall and understanding when there is a positive association between students' learning preferences and the instructor's teaching style. The learning preferences approach to the teaching and learning process has gained significant mileage regardless of the lack of experimental proof to support the effectiveness of this approach.

There have been a number of methods used to assess the learning preferences/styles of students but all these methods typically ask students to estimate the kind of information presentation they are most comfortable with. Among these approaches being used widely is the Visual/Aural/Read and Write/Kinesthetic (VARKR) questionnaire, introduced by Neil Fleming in 1987, which seeks to categorize learners into at least four major learning preference classes. Neil Flemming (2011) described these four major learning preferences as follows:

- *Visual learners:* These are students who prefer information being presented to them on flip charts, whiteboard, graphics, and pictures. These learners are probably creative and may prefer to study new musical concepts from a score rather than listen to explanations from an educator.
- *Aural (or oral)/auditory learners:* These learners prefer to sit back and listen. They do not make a lot of notes, and may find it useful to record lectures for later playbacks and reference.
- *Read/write learners*: These are the students who prefer to read the information for themselves and take a lot of notes. These learners benefit better when they are given access to additional relevant information through hand-outs and guided readings.
- *Kinesthetic (or tactile) learners:* These learners cannot sit still for long and like to fiddle with things since they prefer to be actively involved in their learning process. They therefore benefit from being actively involved in the learning strategies in class.

Although the literature on learning styles is massive, Weimer (2012), contends that currently, evidence supporting learning styles is being challenged. In her account of a paper presented by Riener, and Willingham, (2010) on ―learning styles: Concepts and evidence", Weimer reports that these two researchers agree with learning theorists that ―learners are different from each other, these differences affect their performance, and teachers should take these differences in to account" (p. 33). However, they underscore that matching the instructional style to reflect the learners learning style is not supported by research.

Weimer also revealed that very few studies have even used an experimental methodology capable of testing the validity of learning styles applied to education.

Reiner and Willingham point out that the idea of learning styles is widely known among post-secondary teachers and students. On this account, they quote research showing that 90 percent of the students approve that ―people have their own learning style" (p. 33). This belief Weimer believes can ―constrain" learners in that if students believe that they are visual learners and the instructor is not supporting the presentation of material visually, then these students may think they cannot learn it.

2.6. The Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Interest in Learning.

Li (2008) proposed two hypotheses about the significant role of interest in the learning process. In a classroom situation, interest is required to meet students' intellectual as well as emotional needs; interest can never be imposed on an individual by external forces, but a teacher can help increase the learners' interest.

From a psychological point of view, Chang (1996) says the term *interest* has a two-ply meaning that takes into account, first, an individual's internal orientation when he/she expresses the choice of someone or something and, second, the small difference between interest and motives as both of them are the central causes of an individual's behaviour.

For Chiu (2007), interest is innate and yet can be boosted by outer forces. Chen (2008) tackled interest in learning in three groups, thus individual interest which is a personal quality that is quite fixed and changes a little; then situational interest which is an emotional state caused by fascinating mathematics-related activities or the content of teaching materials; and finally interest-motivated psychological state that occurs when an individual is showing serious interest in something and they focused all attention on what rouses that interest, while disregarding everything else in the surroundings. She added that interest could be nurtured in a classroom setting in order to offer ―meaningful alternatives" to students (McPhail, 2003).

According to Chen, this can be achieved by: selecting well-compiled teaching materials; selecting teaching materials that are full of variety and also vibrant; choosing teaching and learning materials that students have prerequisite knowledge of and also urging students to actively participate in the process. She further added that teachers should strive to put to use unique ideas and variation, giving hints/reminders immediately useful to students; and helping the teacher set an example by showing enthusiasm and interest about what is being taught.

Lai (2010) describes interest in learning as personal preferences with respect to learning, which means that an individual chooses one thing in place of another. Lai claims that sometimes a positive psychological state occurs during their interaction. Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001) discovered that readers reflected little interest in reading materials when they lack related intellectual experience.

For Schraw and Dennison (1994), they believe learners possess independence over a learning task and, for that matter, are able to strengthen their inner motives to increase strong participation with regards to self-decision and control-oriented accomplishments.

Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001) placed interest into categories, and further enumerated five fundamental themes regarding individual interest and/or situational interest; namely latent interest, text-based interest, actualised interest, task-based interest, and knowledge-based interest. In their research, Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001) revealed that when readers lack related intellectual experience of a particular text/material, they reflected little interest in reading such materials. Similarly, Hsueh (2009) noted in an experiential study a strong and constant connection between text-based interest and situational interest, though the relationship between inductivity and situational interest is not supported with sufficient evidence.

Lai then diagnosed the factors at the back of task-based interest as:

- Encoding-task manipulation: A method in which learners‘ interest is raised in learning by consciously changing their learning objectives or strategies.
- Change-of-text manipulation: By this method, attention is concentrated on certain parts of the text; this method therefore helps to eliminate superfluity from the structure of learning content or boosts the logical connection throughout the textual content and, as a result, incites in the individual consciousness to become more active in learning. In other words, the majority of learners will increase interest in learning if they are able to easily follow the textual content.

A summary of the studies mentioned above indicates that a situational interest is recognized by students in class as a result of the teacher‘s enthusiasm/zeal or passion for what is being taught, and an individual interest that stimulates the individual to learn earnestly with a focus on their prior knowledge and emotions.

Among the literature mentioned above, a majority of studies cited the categories of interests in learning proposed by Schraw and Lehman (2001). In as much as their five-core themes model in their categorisation method remains basically accepted till this day, the functional definitions or meanings given below are based on how these two scholars categorised those variables:

- Latent interest: This method focuses on the long-term interest of an individual in learning a particular topic or discipline. It is referred to as an individual‘s internal inclination that guides him/her through cognitive activities, including interests (in learning) related to all senses and values. In other words, one can say that the latent interest takes place when individuals reinforce their emotional attitudes toward the task of learning in which they are engaged, and individual‘s value-

related beliefs/principles of knowledge/tasks are undoubtedly a critical part of their goals in a long-term learning process.

- Actualised interest: There is a motivating force for any individual to learn a particular topic or discipline, and this is the actualised interest. Actualised interest, compared to the latent interest, takes into account specific content that is more precise and clearly defined and, therefore, makes reference to the extent of an individual‘s participation in a certain task of learning.
- Text-based interest: The text-induced interest in learning is characterized by inductivity, intensity and consistency. It also refers to the interest, which is originated by a text an individual intends to learn.
- Task-based interest: This interest is one stimulated from altered teaching materials that an individual is subjected to. For instance, an individual‘s interest in learning may be influenced by altered objectives/text (of learning) that, in turn, varies depending on the task of learning assigned.
- Knowledge-based interest: This interest is the effect of prerequisite knowledge and experiences on an individual‘s current task of learning.

From the above it is only apparent that most children can master the same content but how they master it is influenced by their individual learning styles.

2.7 Adult Learning

Learning in adulthood is different from learning in childhood (Knowles, 1984). In other to understand how undergraduates learn, one must first of all endeavour to understand how adults learn. Fortunately, this is well known by educators specializing in adult education; –Adults learn by connecting experience with reflection" (Gillen 2005. p208).

Much the same Merriam and Caffarella, (1999) affirm that adult learners are fond of learning from experience by linking what they are currently learning to previous encounters and potential future circumstances.

By extension, Alhassan (2012) even posits that how well institutions design curricula that are commensurate with how adults learn can have an effect on whether an undergraduate persists to graduation or not. He further affirms that effective adult learning opportunities need to be created in ways that take personal development into consideration. By so doing, he believes the goal of transformative learning can be achieved. The concept of self-directed learning, andragogy, and perspective transformation, has been critical to the development of adult learning theory (Merriam, 1993). Consequently, Alhassan summarizes the tenets of Andragogy about the design of learning as follows:

1. Adults have the need to know why they are learning something.
2. Adults learn through doing.
3. Adults are problem-solvers.
4. Adults learn best when the subject is of immediate use (2012 p 164).

Based on the principles above Houle and Yi have enumerated three types of adult learners which I use to close the discussion on how adults learn.

In a qualitative study conducted by Houle (1961) of individuals participating in various types of learning, Houle identified three subgroups of learners: adults who are goal oriented, adults who are activity inclined, and adults who are learning oriented. Insightfully, Yi suggests three methods to foster learning in adult organizations:

1. Problem-Based Learning, which seeks to increase problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
2. Cooperative learning, which builds communication and interpersonal skills.
3. Situated learning, which targets specific skills that can be directly related to the field of work (Yi, 2005).

2.8 Entry Qualifications and Prerequisites

2.8.1 Current Practices in Admission/Recruitment Criteria.

For a number of institutions, student admission is based on a number of different qualifications to the extent that students receiving instruction in the same course differ widely in terms of their prior knowledge.

In Europe, the Open University of the UK (1970) was the first established to organize open and distance education for a broad range of curricula, especially to widen the participation of students who don't fulfil all usual admission criteria. Consequently, in the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey open universities were established, using the same model with an open admission. Millions of students have successfully followed Open University education in the meantime and still do so.

The content is well explained and structured around learning activities and assessments. Special course units are aimed at remedying ensuing knowledge gaps. Multiple learning media are used. Learning is supported by face-to-face tutorials in

study centres and/or by learning communities online. Students get personal study guidance and attention. All this should enable students, who don't fulfil all entry requirements to study degree programmes at the university level.

2.8.2 Students Awareness of Absence of Prior Knowledge of Entry Requirements

Strangman and Hall (2004) report several studies that show that prior knowledge activation can actually impede new learning when students do carry misunderstandings or misperceptions into the learning environment they find themselves. Pre-existing and established ideas can distort or interfere with the new content being taught. If this occurs without any intervention, students can fare poorly on tests and disregard information that conflicts with theirs. Although Campbell (2008) understands that creating an enabling environment that stimulates students towards critical thinking is a difficult task, he encourages teachers to attempt to find, or help the student to discover creative ways to correct such ideas when their students face misconceptions. A positive, inquiry-based classroom environment is a prerequisite for students to share what they think they know. At the same time, it also creates a level playing field of knowledge for all students‘ matters. Even a shallow amount of correct prior knowledge goes a long way to improve learning in the short run and allows for greater depth at a future time (Marzano, 2004).

It would be a mistake to think that the only influence background/ prior knowledge has on learning is negative. It is definitely not the case. Learning ultimately begins with the known and proceeds to the unknown. Connecting everyday experiences with classroom topics and intentionally engaging pre-existing knowledge with new classroom content can promote meaningful and lasting learning.

Patchen (2005) also talks about diversifying classroom groups in order to encourage participation among all students and also to pose questions that are answerable to everyone. For example, teachers can ask students for their opinions of classroom readings to avoid right or wrong response constraints. For culturally diverse students, previewing can be especially useful in achieving academic success.

Sandefur, Watson, & Johnston (2007) explain that some students need explicit frames of reference. The authors recommend ―frontloading" the development of prior knowledge through visual media or simply talking about the issue. It goes without saying that background knowledge is contextual and culturally construed. A challenge thrown to teachers, therefore, is for them to ensure that all students reach the same high standards while communicating respect for their students' uniqueness.

All students can be helped to acquire the same skills necessary for contemporary society, and at the same time, respect for their diversity can be affirmed. What are strategies that teachers can use to engage students' cultural knowledge? Such techniques consist of asking open-ended questions so that students are not limited to right or wrong responses or approaches (Dom Nwachukwu, 2005; State of Queensland, 2002). As the brief literature review reveals, background knowledge plays a significant role in student achievement.

Learning is a cumulative process, thus a student recruited with higher entry requirements will be well prepared for the course material compared to a student admitted based on the bare minimum qualifications. It is important for educators to have an idea of how well or ill-prepared admitted students are based on their qualifications.

2.8.3 Entry Requirements at New Zealand Universities

To gain University Entrance a student in New Zealand must have three approved L3 National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) subjects, ten literacy credits at L2 or above, and ten numeracy credits at L1 or above. Alternatively, a student can gain university entrance by completing and passing the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma. NCEA Music Standards:

There are multiple standards within Levels 1 to 3 NCEA music curricula. The specific standards I refer to are:

Music Works

- Harmony
- Solo Performance
- Score reading
- Composition
- Group Performance

International Baccalaureate (IB):

The International Baccalaureate diploma is a two-year qualification that certain schools (usually those privately funded) choose to run alongside NCEA. The IB course runs in the final two years of secondary school (Y12-13) and assessments are confined to the final year (Y13).

IB Music Standards:

There are multiple components in the IB music curriculum. The specific standards I refer to are:

Listening

- Composition
- Solo Performance
- Group Performance

First-Year University Requirements – Bachelor of Music (BMus) Classical at Auckland University, New Zealand

Performance Students

The following details a typical workload for students in their first year of study:

Four compulsory first year papers:

- Performance: Study/tuition in chosen instrument/voice
- Theory: Harmony and counterpoint, aural perception and keyboard studies
- Theory: Tonal music procedures, conventional forms, melodic and rhythmic dictation.
- Musicology: Understanding Music Through the Lens of the 20th and 21st Centuries At least two optional first-year papers:
- Musicology: e.g. Music history - Renaissance through to 21st century
- Performance: e.g. Accompanying, Large ensemble, or Dictation and language

First-Year University Requirements – BMus Jazz Students at Auckland University, New Zealand

Six standard papers:

- Musicology: Understanding Music Through the Lens of the 20th and 21st Centuries

- Jazz performance: Competency in chosen instrument/voice, basic piano skills in Jazz improvisation: Competency in improvisation skills and standard jazz language
- Jazz ensemble: Ensemble playing techniques, repertoire knowledge
- Jazz History: Political and social contexts
- Jazz Theory: Theoretical knowledge for composition, analysis, improvisation, and transposition.

International Music Qualification Boards:

ABRSM – Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

Trinity College – Trinity College London, these two institutions are the British examination boards preferred by private music teachers in New Zealand. They offer both practical and theory examinations.

Finally, there are a range of "Music Studies" courses that can be taken by interested students without musical theory or ability.

2.8.4 Entry Requirements at UEW

At UEW efforts are taken to ensure that only candidates who possess satisfactory knowledge foundation are offered admission into the department. Hence apart from the General minimum requirements, other specific programme requirements are mandatory for a successful admission. At UEW there are at least 3 channels for admitting candidates to read music in its Music Department; Direct, Entrance Examined, and Music Vacation Camp.

Direct applicants are candidates who apply with SHS or HND certificates in any subject area or combination. These categories of students are among those who show interest in studying music but have no certificate to rely on. Such students are

encouraged to enroll for two (2) months intensive Vacation camp after which they will be eligible to apply to be given the nod to read music in the department.

With respect to Bachelor programmes, Direct applicants are required to have at least six (6) WASSCE) passes which should include three (3) core subjects: English Language, Mathematics and Integrated Science in addition to three (3) Electives in relevant subjects with a total aggregate of thirty-six (36) or better. But full-time candidates must pass an interview.

In addition to these statutory University regulations on admission, the Music department has instituted an annual Vacation Camp Certificate programme where participants are taught music theory rudiments, aural and sight, instrumental skills and musicianship. Upon successful completion of this programme candidates are awarded a certificate of participation and are considered for admission to read Diploma or Bachelor programmes. Candidates who apply as matured students are required to pass an entrance exam for admission. This exam serves as a filter of the candidates and eliminates those who lack basic knowledge in music theory, aural, and in general knowledge.

Below is a brief description of first-year requirements as at 2015 by Dr. E. A. Ebeli, a senior lecturer at UEW.

First-Year University Requirements – Bachelor of Arts Music Education

In addition to a course each from African studies and Education studies, Bachelor of Arts students are required to take six (6) music courses.

- Rudiments & Music Theory: made up of fundamentals in Western music notation.

- Musical Styles I & II: Introduction to Ethnomusicology: this is an introductory study of music in African culture and Western Musical Literature.
- Musicianship & Ensemble I & II: This is an preliminary course to aural, performance and building of repertoire for major and minor instruments. Students are required to participate in any one of these ensembles on a weekly basis: Strings, Brass, Dance band, Traditional Ensembles, Mixed Chorus.
- Introduction to Western Music**:** This is a relatively new level 100 course designed to introduce students to Western music.
- Aural & Sight: made of ear-training and sight reading of simple melodies.
- Elementary Harmony: introduction to four-part harmony.
- Music Technology: this is a comprehensive study of music and technology including elctro-acoustic music, computer and MIDI applications, sequencing, sounds cape and multimedia composition, and the web.

First-Year University Requirements – Bachelor of Music (BMUS)

- Rudiments & Music Theory: made up of fundamentals in Western music notation.
- Musical Styles: Introduction to Ethnomusicology: this is an introductory study of music in African culture and
- Musicianship & Ensemble I & II: This is a preliminary course to aural performance and building of repertoire for major and minor instruments. Students are required to participate in any one of these ensembles on a weekly basis: Strings, Brass, Dance band, Traditional Ensembles, Mixed Chorus.
- African Music and Dance Directing: this course is designed to prepare students to drum, sing, dance and direct traditional indigenous ensembles.

- Music Technology: this is a comprehensive study of music and technology including elctro-acoustic music, computer and MIDI applications, sequencing, sounds cape and multimedia composition, and the web.
- Theatre Studio: this course is about development of performance competencies and exposes students to the stages of production.

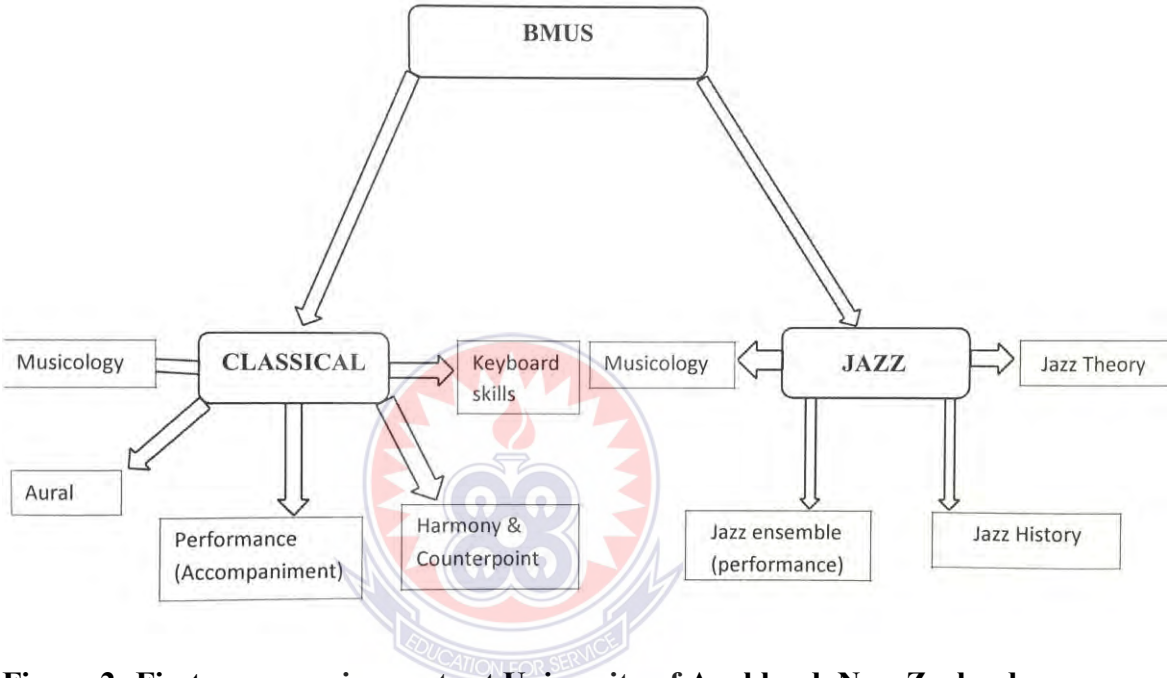

Figure 2: First year requirements at University of Auckland, New Zealand

Wenden L. (2015)

In New Zealand Universities, the BMUS course is divided into two main streams that capture the disparities in musicians‘ background of students. The advantage here is that students can readily fit into at least one musical genre. This competency based structure is likely to motivate students to achieve more since their interests and competencies have been recognized by the course design itself.

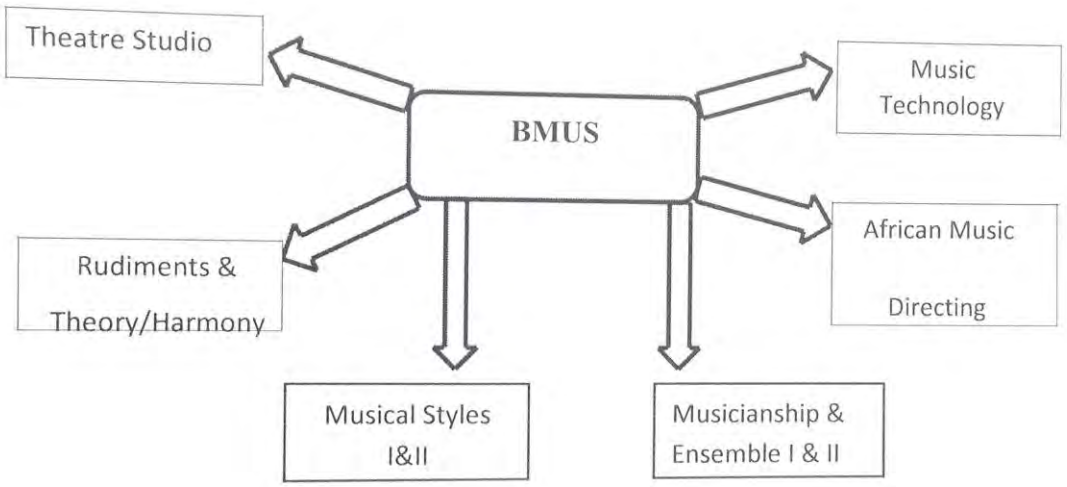

Figure 3: First Year Requirements at UEW

E.A. Ebeli (2015)

At UEW Music Department, musical competencies are rather spelt out in its programme description brochure. The competencies reflect major skills needed for art music, traditional music and popular music with emphasis on repertoire from both Western and African origins without bias. In this booklet, equal attention is given to developing students' skills in Art music, popular music and African music. Since all BMUS students are obliged to take the same courses it is envisaged that this course will become overloaded.

2.9 Creation of new musical meaning

Conceptual development is not simply one of several possible interests for an educator; it is rather the essence of his concerns Woodruff A. (1970)

A good understanding of how music students create new musical meaning will play a vital role in background knowledge activation. This will also enable educators to adopt teaching methods that match with the mechanisms that learners employ to organize new concepts into their existing knowledge framework. At this, Prof. Woodruff points out that ~~–e~~onceptual functioning is equivalent to human

functioning". Therefore, all teachers of music of young children, older children, young adults, or adults-must really understand human functioning to successfully develop in their students' knowledge of a particular discipline.

In a review of Prof. Woodruff's article on *how children learn*, Evenson (1970) affirms that the even though good teachers unconsciously pay attention to ~~h~~human functioning" it is the teacher who understands the processes controlling human behaviour who can create a structure for effective evaluation purposeful decision making. He explains that such teachers can plan their lessons more effectively in ways that ensure that desirable outcomes are achieved more frequently. To him the most effective ways to help students develop rewarding musical behavioural patterns is to engage them in the very musical behaviours believed to constitute a desirable collection of out-of school behaviours and to see that those behaviours carry in their wake concepts and value patterns that reflect those meanings and feelings.

Woodruff emphasized that concepts are individually constructed memories of the musical substances one has encountered in the past. Furthermore, he affirms that human beings engage in three continuing and interconnected forms or types of behaviour that have a consistency with past experiences in a cumulative pattern; acts of recognition and choosing, acts of execution of thoughts and choices, and acts of non-verbal.

2.9.1 Perception of Stimuli

Perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Lindsay &Norman, 1977). In other words when people are confronted with situations or stimuli, they interpret the stimuli into something meaningful to them based on prior experiences. However, what an individual perceives may be considerably different from reality.

The perception process is made up of four stages: stimulation, registration, organization, and interpretation (Borkowski 2011).

Broadbent (1958) addressed the concept of perceptual vigilance with his filter model. He believes that information from every form of stimuli passed through a filter system such that the filter rejected an unattended message at an early stage of processing. Mcloed (2008). Broadbent argued that, due to limited capacity, a person must process information selectively and, therefore, when presented with information from two different channels (i.e., methods of delivery such as visual and auditory), an individual's perceptual system processes only that which it believes to be most relevant.

At this, Borkowski believes that perceptual defense can be negative because it can generate an internal barrier that restraints the external stimuli passing through the perception process when it is not harmonious with the person's current beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and such like. This selective perception occurs when an individual limits the processing of external stimuli by selectively interpreting what he or she sees based on beliefs, experience, or attitudes (Sherif & Cantril, 1945).

Broadbent's filter theory has been updated in recent years. A –Selection-for-Action VIEW" suggests that filtering is not just a consequence of capacity limitations, but is driven by goal-oriented actions (Van der Heijden, 1992). Therefore, when on is working toward a target, one will bounce over information that does not support one's plan (Borkowski 2011). Recent studies on the brain explain selective perception as a result of activation of cortical maps and neural networks (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 1998). The capacity to incorporate new learning coupled with the presence of preconceived thoughts makes people selective in what they perceive.

2.9.2 Circulation of Musical Concepts

To give credence to the issue of conceptual development, Monsour (1970) asserts that when musical elements are developed, students will by themselves be able to assimilate important musical moments as they play, sing and listen. He further enjoins teachers to help students to project musical goals that are linked with the dynamic world of music thereby ensuring that learners develop the skills required for self-discovery.

Woodruff is emphatic when he makes his opinion on how musical concepts should be transmitted.

The transmission of conceptual patterns of such variety, at any useful level of validity, is an utter impossibility by any form of person-to person communication. Communication is not the transmission of meanings; it is the transmission of symbols that evoke meanings in the minds of the listeners who already have the meanings.

Benn (1970) maintains that this statement is in agreement with the current emphasis on the ―discovery" or ―inquiry" method. In the classroom, it means that the pupil will learn through his own investigation rather than from the teacher's spoken words.

Benn believes that the conceptual patterns we possess are literal reflection of the properties of the environmental referents we interact with. He adds that in music, the environmental referents are the sounds of music in the classroom or in the home.

He wants us to remember that concepts are neither ―things" nor teachable ―terms". For this reason, concepts should not be reinforced by discursive verbalization but by involvement with the content. Benn enjoins music faculties to withdraw from verbal dominated curricula and academic information and substitute it with a host of concepts and competencies that are taken from society because to him, verbal competency and academic information are but only a small part of the student's total intelligence.

Similarly, Woodruff insists, ―language is adjunctive to conceptual behaviour and not central.‖ He explains that music teachers and students should share a background of musical concepts upon which discussions and lessons can focus on. By so doing both parties will possess the same reference point that will make verbal discussions more meaningful and less abstractive to the learner.

2.10 Conclusion

This review has taken a look at pertinent issues that have to do with learner‘s pre-admission background skills or knowledge, which includes discussions of students‘ identities and attitudes, diversity of backgrounds, their prior knowledge and their interests. With the use of Piagets‘ theory of schemas and J. Brunners‘ theory of constructivism attempts have been made to understand current trends in learners‘ background development. It is clear from the literature reviewed that literature abounds to support the claim that background knowledge does plays a role in creation of further meaning as seen in the work of many scholars in the English, maths, sciences and in the humanities. Along with this, it is also clear that studies on learner‘s background have almost always focused on only finding out whether or not prior learning has any role to play on academic performance. But until the intricacies of background experiences (be it present, limited or absent) on vital educational concerns such as learner‘s interests, academic performance, ways of conceptualization and motivations, is empirically established, many educational institutions including music departments are likely to treat the legitimate issue of background enculturation as a side cake. In addition, this review has highlighted some innovative approaches aimed at helping many students to successfully activate their prior knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, which is quantitative. Here the procedures used in investigating the musical abilities of the total population of music students (389) in the 2016/17 academic year group. For the purpose of this study, only level 100 students (117) were specifically chosen as the sample for this study.

It also includes the respondents, research instrument, the research environment of the study and analysis of the data gathered. The focus of this study was to explore the musical abilities of fresh students of the 2016/17 academic year of the University of Education (UEW) and then collate the views of respondents on the relationship between prior knowledge on musical proficiency.

3.2. Research Area

The main campus of UEW is located in Winneba, a town in the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. UEW operates from four campuses – Winneba, Kumasi, Mampong and Ajumako. The Winneba campus has three sub-campuses namely, North, Central and South campuses. Starting with eight (8) Academic Departments and the Institute for Educational Development and Extension (IEDE), the University now has twenty-nine (29) Academic Departments and Centres, six Faculties and twelve (12) Distance Education Regional Study Centres throughout the country.

The Department of Music Education is surrounded by a main lorry park, the central market of the Winneba town and other social facilities like restaurants and

stores. The central campus is rather a twin campus because it also accommodates the Department of Theatre and Dance. The department is walled and gated and of about 30 m/square, with 3 small sized lecture rooms, a theatre, a piano lab, an ICT lab, a sound recording studio and a rehearsal studio. The music department has a mirror room for dance lessons and rehearsals. Two (2) buildings that are under construction are expected upon completion to provide more space for lessons, rehearsals and concerts. However, one is far advanced and nearing completion. The department offers three (3) undergraduate programmes namely, Bachelor of Arts in Music Education; Bachelor of Arts in Music; and Diploma in Music with post-graduate and sandwich courses.

The department has a staff strength of 23, made up of 16 lecturers, 5 instructors, an Administrator, 2 administrative assistants, a graduate assistant. A variable number of national service personnel do support both the administrative and teaching staff year after year. As at the time of this study, the Department had a population of 409 students. Even though the school is located in a Guan community who speak predominantly Effutu language and share boundaries with the Gomoas and the Agonas, aside the English language which is the language of instruction of the school, students are mostly found speaking Ewe, Twi, Fante and Ga indicating an ethnically diverse student body.

Students who offer Bachelor programmes undergo an eight (8)-semester schedule and at the end of every semester take an exam to compliment the assignments and quizzes in the course of the semester.

3.3 Research Design

This work uses a quantitative approach to enable the researcher to gather general information with regards to the musical background of all respondents.

3.4 Population

The researcher selected the University of Education, Winneba for the study. Out of the total number of music students only level 100 students were selected for this study. The population of all level hundred's in 2016/17 academic year were 117 in total. 68 of the participants had attended senior secondary school, 5 applied with Higher National Diploma and 5 possessed a degree in other fields other than music.

The participants in this research project are 76 Bachelor of Arts Music Education students, 16 Bachelor of Music (Bmus) students and 25 Diploma in Music (Dmus) students.

The principal participants in this research project are all level 100 music students in their first year irrespective of their choice of programme.

3.5 Sampling Technique

For the purpose of this study a census sample of 117 students in the 2016/17 academic year was made to enable the researcher to investigate the musical backgrounds of the entire population.

3.6 Research Instruments

For the purpose of this study a questionnaire, and document analysis was used to collect data from respondents.

3.7. Sampling Procedure

Initially I had planned to interview 20 students from this year group but when I envisaged that I could collect information on all freshers within the stipulated time frame for this project, I decided to use a questionnaire. This method enabled me to

ascertain the musical competencies of all level 100 students instead of selecting just a few.

3.8 Data Collection

3.8.1 Questionnaire

A written questionnaire was designed to enable the researcher to collect the relevant information that can answer the research questions. The questions were divided into two main parts, section A and B. The first section provided the demographic data of participants which comprised of age, sex and educational qualification. Participants were required to answer a total of 75 questions, which were made up of both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Following the careful explanation of the purpose of the study to the entire class of level 100 students in the Amu Theatre, I assured them of the confidentiality of the information they were about to give. Next I took time to explain the items on the questionnaire after which I encouraged respondents to call my attention to any difficult portions of the document.

On the average it took about 30 minutes for respondents to fill the questionnaire.

Out of the 117 questionnaires distributed, 91 sheets, representing 77.8 % of the entire population of level 100‘s were retrieved.

3.8.2 Document Analysis

I analyzed the department‘s handbook on programmes in order to afford me insight into the admission requirements and courses that are being run by the department. By comparing respondents‘ background competencies with general course requirements, I will be able to determine whether or not learners possess

sufficient skills, knowledge and attitudes that are crucial for the attainment of the departments' vision, which is presented below:

Becoming a centre of excellence for the training of music teachers and professional musicians and dance instructors, and be internationally recognized as a centre for the promotion of African music and dance".

For this vision to be achieved, the background experiences beginners bring with them into the academic community have to be developed in ways that sustain interest and ensure continuity. For example, objectives for keyboard skills for all level 100's are stated as follows;

> —The course introduces students to the basic techniques required for solo performance of an instrument focusing on reading and playing skills for elementary keyboard repertoire. Attention is given to skills and techniques necessary for reading and playing at increasing levels of proficiency. Students will study varied elementary repertoire from both western and African sources. Foundation is laid for critical listening and sight reading."

Solo performance is where a person performs on an instrument with or without accompaniment. Before this objective can be achieved, the learner must be familiar at least with the notes of the scale in which will be used in the repertoire they will be playing. For the sight-reading requirement, the beginner should have acquired the ability to navigate the keyboard without necessarily looking on it. Thus each destination of this course requires definite background competencies for their effective implementation.

3.8.3 Analyses of Questionnaire

In order to facilitate the synthesis of participants' responses, the researcher formulated two categories of respondents based on their ability to play musical instruments. In this light, the musical competencies of respondents were perused using

two broad classes: instrumentalists and non- instrumentalists. Further subgroups were created to enable me capture the diversity of background experiences inherent in participants‘ musical backgrounds as shown below.

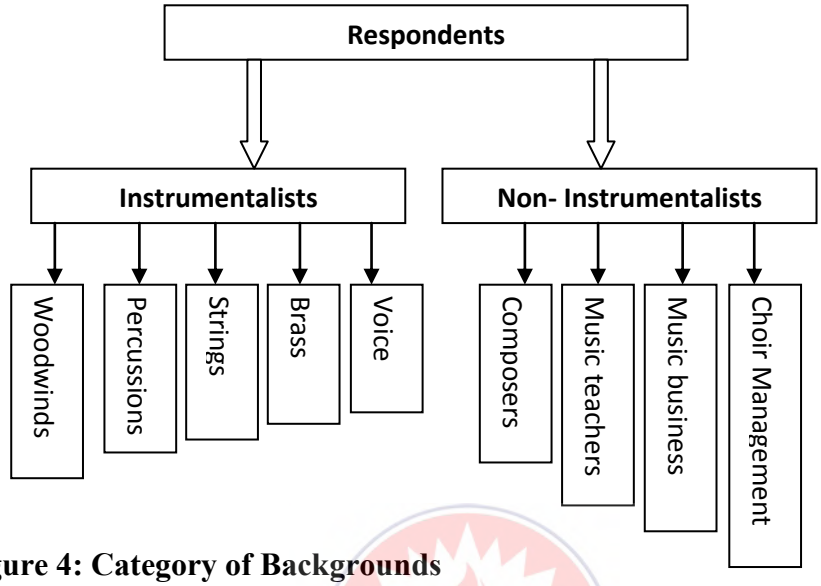

Figure 4: Category of Backgrounds

After collecting the data, I manually tallied the responses for each question after that I used SPSS to process the data into graphs and tables.

3.8.4 Limitations of the Study

During the data collection procedure, some respondents were in haste to complete the questionnaire so they failed to respond to some of the questions. As a result, many of the columns created for additional perceptions were left blank (especially on research question three (3)). Consequently, discussions on research question three (3) lacked respondents‘ views to support the tables and charts.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Overview of this chapter

In this chapter, the data gathered from the students is presented in relation to the research objectives. This chapter discusses the results of the structured questionnaire answered by 91 participants. Prior to the administration of this questionnaire, the significance, rationale and purpose of the study were clarified to respondents. Furthermore, the respondents were assured that the data they will provide will be treated with confidentiality and used for the purpose of this research only. The main objective of this study is to investigate background competencies of beginning music students with regards to their interests and creation of new meaning.

The layout of this chapter encompasses a detailed account of the demographic profile of the respondents.

Section A: Demographic Profiles

The profile of the respondents is examined in terms of age, gender, and educational qualification.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	61	67.0	67.0	**67.0**
Female	12	13.2	13.2	**80.2**
Skip	18	19.8	19.8	**100**
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100**

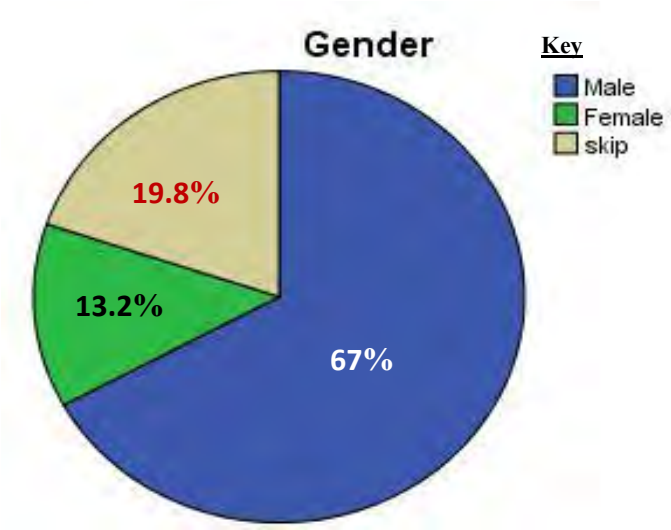

Figure 5: Gender

Figure 5 shows the Gender of the respondents. Sixty-seven percent (67 %) of the respondents were males hence they formed the dominant gender. The females were in the minority of 13.2%. Sadly 19.8% of respondents failed to disclose their gender.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 30	73	80.2	80.2	80.2
30-40	11	12.1	12.1	92.3
Skip	7	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

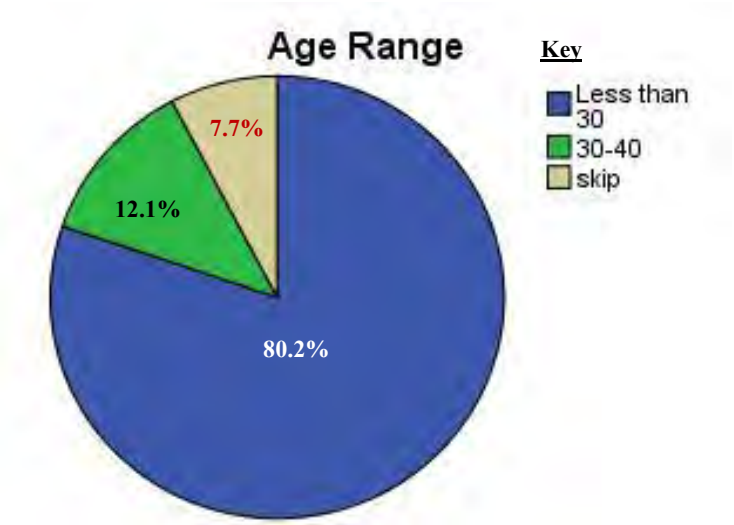

Figure 6: Age Range

Figure 6 shows the age range of the respondents. 80.2% of the respondents were below the age of thirty 30 years, which means the majority of the students were young adults below the age of 30 years. On the other hand, 12.1 % in the 30-40 ages range. Lastly 7.7 % of the respondents did not specify their ages.

Table 3: Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SHS certificate	68	74.7	74.7	74.7
Entrance examined	7	7.7	7.7	82.4
HND	5	5.5	5.5	87.9
First degree in other fields apart from music	5	5.5	5.5	93.4
Skip	6	6.6	6.6	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Figure 7: Educational Qualification

The figure above shows the distribution of the respondents in terms of their educational attainment. The report shows 74.7% of them were Senior High School leavers. About 7 % of them sat for entrance examination; yet 5.5% of the respondents possessed a Higher National Diploma. However, 7.7 % of them did not indicate their educational qualification.

4.1 Musical Competencies

Questions in this section were designed to collect data on the musical competencies of respondents before tertiary music education. Respondents‘ musical abilities were solicited under two main units, instrumentalists and non-instrumentalists.

4.1.1 Instrumental Competencies

Table 4: Musical Instrument Competency

Musical Instrument Competency	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
Woodwinds	13	14.3	14.3	14.3
Brass	16	17.6	17.6	31.9
Strings	21	23.1	23.1	54.9
Percussion	13	14.3	14.3	69.2
Voice	15	16.5	16.5	85.7
Keyboard	13	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

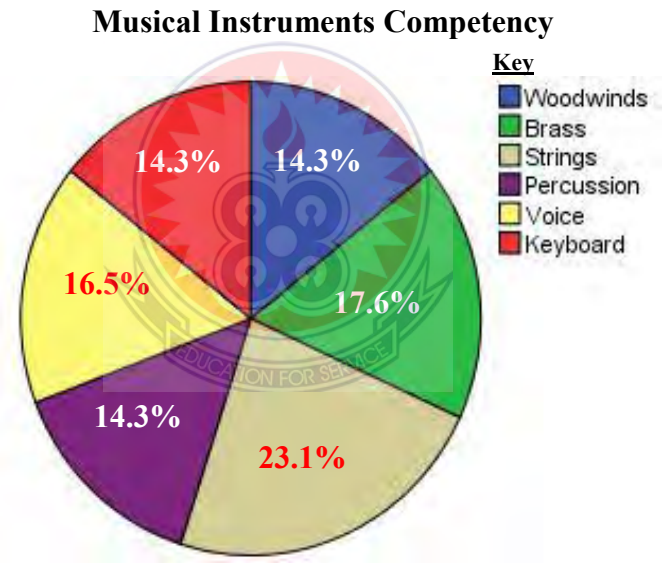

Figure 8: Musical Instruments Competency

The figure above shows the distribution of respondents with regard to the musical competencies of the respondents. The largest group was the string players who formed 28.6% of the total number of the students perhaps because unlike the brass family whose instruments are primarily Western manufactured, the string family comprises musical instruments from both Western and Ghanaian origins; guitar, violin, and *seprewa*. This is followed by –Voice" which forms 22 percent, which

represents about one-quarter of the total population as a result of the fact that vocal music is prevalent over instrumental Ghanaian music. Brass players come next with 20.9%. This number validates Albert and Porter's findings that show that brass instruments are generally regarded as masculine instruments and are therefore best reserved for males. Percussion and woodwinds were both 14.3 percent.

Table 5: Aspect of Singing

Singing Aspect	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lead vocalist	11	12.1	12.1	12.1
Backing vocalist	17	18.7	18.7	30.8
Soprano singer	5	5.5	5.5	36.3
Alto singer	3	3.3	3.3	39.6
Tenor singer	33	36.3	36.3	75.8
Bass singer	18	19.8	19.8	95.6
I don't know the part I sing	2	2.2	2.2	97.8
Skip	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

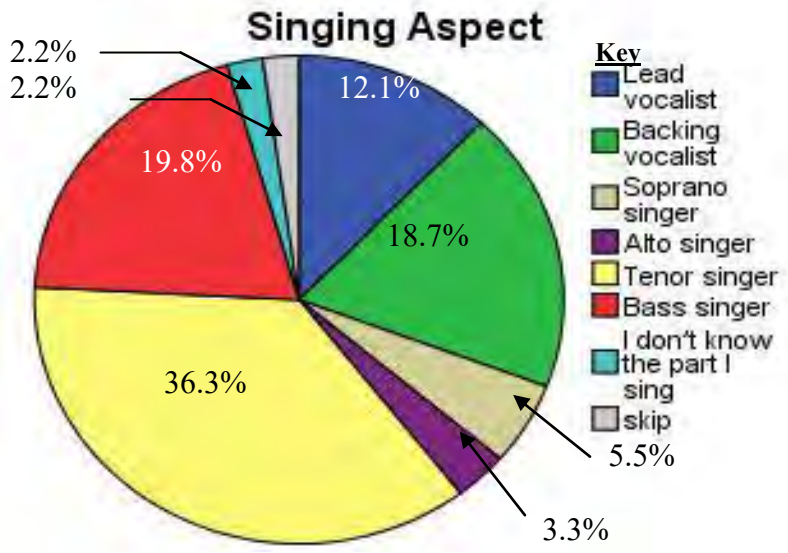

Figure 9: Singing Aspect

The figure above provides the distribution of singers who make up one quarter of the population. According to the data generated, tenors make up the majority with 36.3%. Since the greater part of participants are below the age of 30 years they are likely to find the tenor range more comfortable than otherwise. Bass singers are next with 19.8 %and another 18.7% were backing vocalists. The results also show that 12.1 % were lead vocalists whereas 5.5 % said they were sopranos. Only 2.2 % percent of respondents said they had no idea about the vocal part they sing.

Table 6: Idiom of instrumentation

Instrumental Idiom	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Valid Percent
Purely African idiom	15	16.5	16.5	16.5
Purely Western idiom	14	15.4	15.4	31.9
A combination of both	54	59.3	59.3	91.2
Skip	8	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Figure 10: Instrumental Idiom

Figure 10 considers the idiom in which respondents create and or perform music. 16.5% of the total number of respondents said they use ―purely African idiom"; 15.4% said they use strictly the Western styles of music. Interestingly, more than half of the respondents (59.3%) said they play in both African and Western forms. This figure suggests a trend of instrumental music where musicians combine musical elements from both western and African origins. This finding gives credence to Nketia's (1966) resounding statement that ―the musical heritage of contemporary Africa is music associated with traditional African institutions of the pre-colonial era".

Table 7: Style of play

Instrumental Style	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
Improvisation	41	45.1	45.1	45.1
Accompaniment	46	50.5	50.5	95.6
Skip	4	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100**

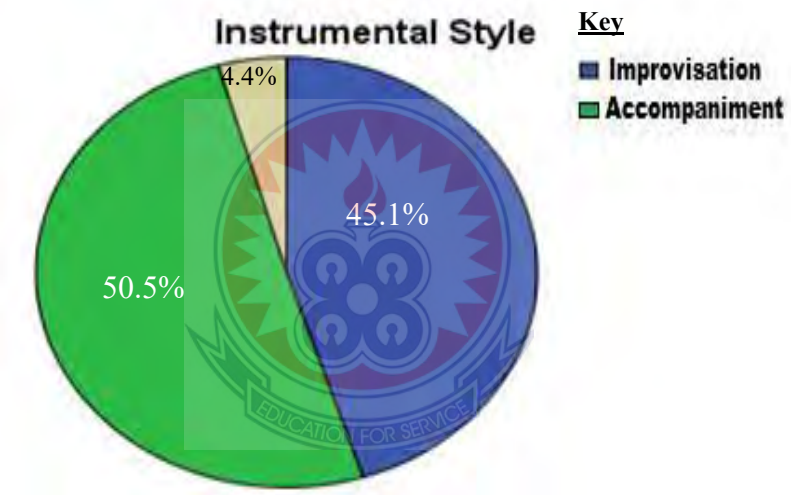

Figure 11: Instrumental Style

Figure 11, shows the playing style of respondents. Among the respondents, accompaniment formed (50.5 %) followed by improvisers 45.1%. Only 4.4 % did not react to this inquiry.

Table 8: Instrument Playing Approach

Instrument Playing Approach	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
I sight read	17	18.7	18.7	18.7
I play by ear	26	28.6	28.6	47.3
I use both	41	45.1	45.1	92.3
Skip	7	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

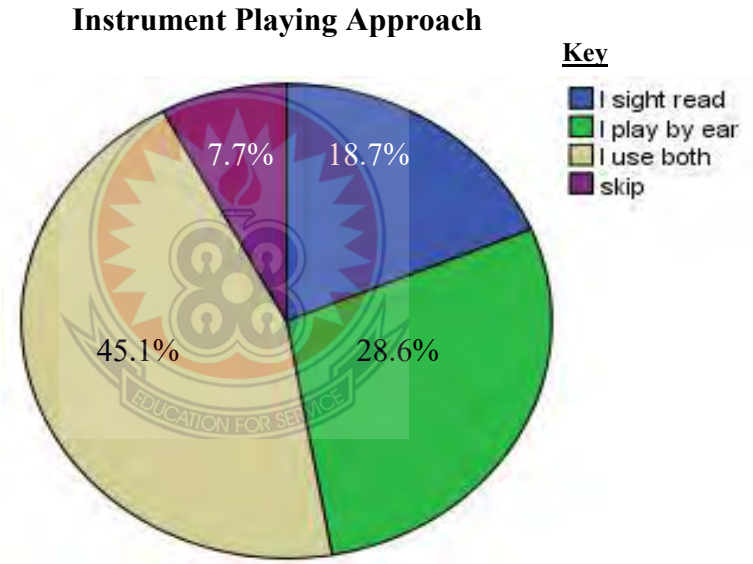

Figure 12: Instrument Playing Approach

The figure above throws light on how respondents did learn to play their various instruments. Out of the total number of participants only 7.7% did not answer this question. Over a quarter of respondents (28.6%) said they could play their instruments by –ear" whereas 18.6 % said they were acquainted with reading from score.

4.1.2 Musical Background of Non-Instrumentalists

This section seeks to gather the information on participants‘ musical expertise other than playing musical instruments.

Table 9: Musical Background of Non-Instrumentalists

Non-Instrumental Music Backgrounds	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
Composition	16	17.6	17.6	17.6
Sound set-up	8	8.8	8.8	26.4
Music teaching	12	13.2	13.2	39.6
Choir Management	31	34.1	34.1	73.6
Dancing	7	7.7	7.7	81.3
Music business	8	8.8	8.8	90.1
Skip	9	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

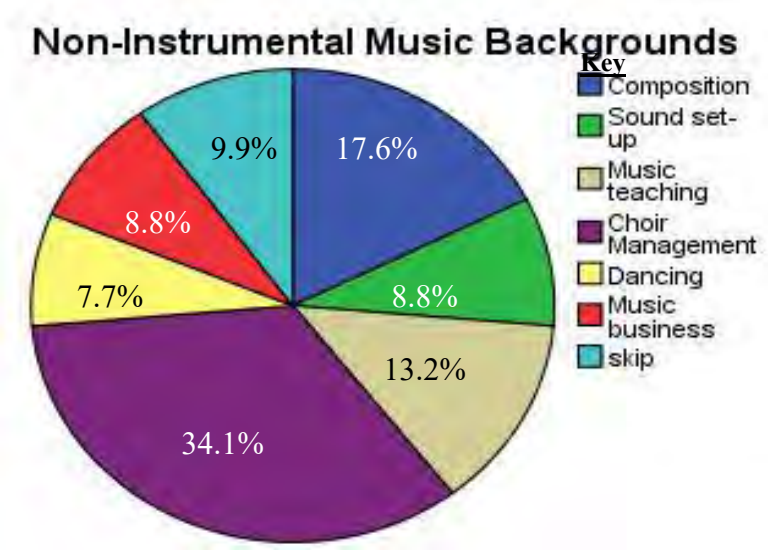

Figure 13:Non-Instrumental Music Backgrounds

The musical background of respondents is of paramount importance to this study. Hence figure 13 gives a general perception about the musical involvement of respondents prior to admission. From the data collected it is evident that those who taught or directed choirs where in the majority with 34.1% followed by composers (17.6%), music teachers (13.2%), sound set up (8.8%) and Music Business (8.8%), dancers (7.7%). However, 9.9% of respondents did not respond to this inquiry. The results show that chorale music forms the greater part of the respondent‘s prior musical experiences. This finding supports the fact that music in Ghana is predominantly chorale.

4.2. Research Question Two

Prior knowledge and Musical Competency

The questions in the section of the questionnaire are meant to disclose respondents‘ perception about the relationship between prior knowledge and instrumental music competencies. Each inquiry in this section begins with a ―true‖ or ―false‖ question after which respondents were asked to briefly explain how their prior-learning on a particular instrument currently affects their musical ability which views have equally been discussed below each chart. In addition to the Western system of musical instrument classification, I equally added ―voice‖ and ―keyboards‖ making a total of six (6) instrument families because these two do not readily fit into the traditional western instrument strata. Hence the instrument groups in this section are keyboards, woodwinds, strings, brass, percussions and voice respectively.

Table 10: Prior Keyboard Knowledge and influence on keyboard skills course

Keyboard Knowledge and Influence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	29	31.9	31.9	31.9
No	30	33.0	33.0	64.8
Skip	32	35.2	35.2	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

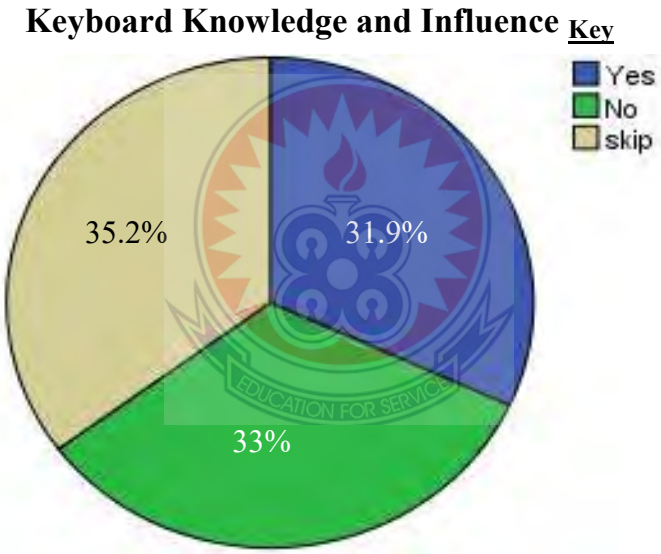

Figure 14: Keyboard Knowledge and Influence

Figure 14 gives an idea on the subjective answers respondents gave to this statement –my previous learning about the keyboard has enhanced my progress on the instrument". One-third (31.9 %) said –Yes", another one-third (33%) said –No". A _No" response to this inquiry means absence of prior knowledge in keyboard playing as captured in this reaction:

–With the help of Madam Sita I can play something on the keyboard but at first I could not play anything."

Perhaps those who ignored this question (35.2%) are those who do not play this instrument at all.

Participants were also required to state how their prior knowledge influenced the progress made in keyboard skills if any. The responses given bothered on either increased speed of playing and or greater accuracy on the keyboard like can be seen in these views below:

I was very slow on sight-reading but now I can sight read with speed.

And:

Because I know how to play, I have now added the sight playing, and it is really going on smoothly.

This suggests that this participants prior knowledge in sight-reading has been developed even though it is not stated how this learner has improved. At least they have confirmed that their prior knowledge is useful in mastering the musical keyboard. Emphasis on sight-reading confirms Mapaya's assertion that tertiary music education in Africa is guilty of glorifying sight-reading over indigenous forms of musical learning such as oral, aural methods (Mapaya, 2007).

Table 11: Prior Woodwinds Knowledge and Influence on Woodwinds Learning

Woodwinds Knowledge and Influence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	33	36.3	36.3	36.3
No	21	23.1	23.1	59.3
Skip	37	40.7	40.7	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

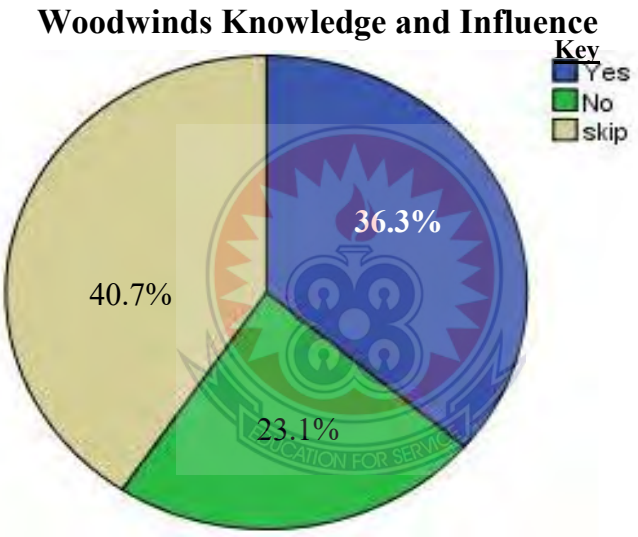

Figure 15: Woodwinds Knowledge and Influence

Figure 15 casts an impression on the influence of prior learning on woodwind instruments like the *Atenteben,* flute, clarinet, and saxophone. First of all, I asked respondents to state whether or not they knew how to play any of the woodwind instruments. 36.3% said ―Yes" whereas 23.1 % stated ―No". 40.7 % gave no answer (this figure is huge because only woodwind players were required to respond to this section).

Here a participant who could play the atenteben also said that his speed and accuracy has increased. Many other responses centred on speed and accuracy

Table 12: Prior Strings Knowledge and Influence on Strings course

Strings Knowledge and Influence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Valid Percent
Yes	16	17.6	17.6	17.6
No	26	28.6	28.6	46.2
Skip	49	53.8	53.8	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

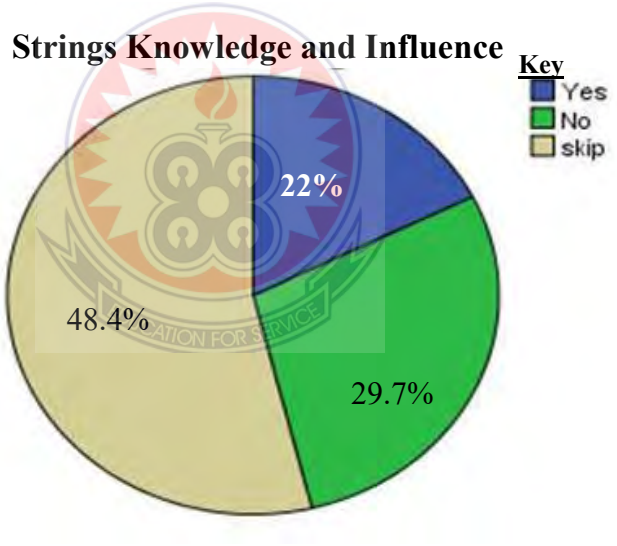

Figure 16: Strings Knowledge and Influence

Figure 16 casts an impression on the influence of prior learning on string instruments like the lead guitar, violin and Cello and such like. To begin with, I asked respondents whether they could play instruments in this category. 17.6% said ―Yes" whereas 28.6% stated ―No". 53.8 % gave no answer. (This figure is huge because only string players were required to respond to this section)

Table 13: Prior Brass Knowledge and Influence on Brass Learning

Brass Knowledge and Influence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Valid Percent
Yes	20	22.0	22.0	22.0
No	27	29.7	29.7	51.6
Skip	44	48.4	48.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

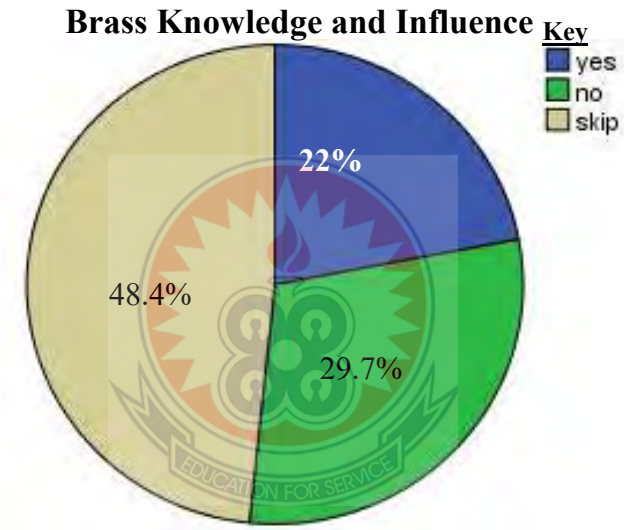

Figure 17: Brass Knowledge and Influence

Figure 17 represents the views of respondents on the influence of their own prior learning of brass instrument(s) on brass influence. 22% said, ―Yes" while 29.7% said ―No". 48.4% skipped this question.

Table 14: Prior Percussions Knowledge and Influence on Percussions Learning

Percussions Knowledge and Influence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	22	24.2	24.2	24.2
No	25	27.5	27.5	51.6
Skip	44	48.4	48.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

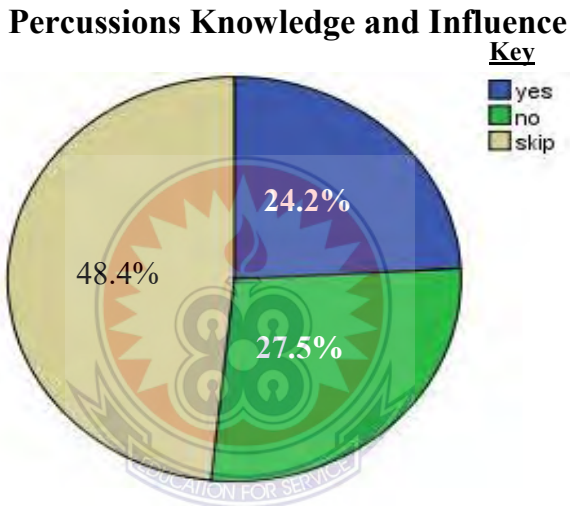

Figure 18: Musical Instruments Competency

For Figure 18 the diagram gives an idea about the answers respondents gave to this statement ―I knew how to play a percussion instrument prior to this programme". Out of the total number of respondents, 24.2% said ―Yes", whereas 27.5 % stated ―No". Those who ignored this question were 48.4%.

Table 15: Singers and Musical Domain

Singers and Music Domain	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent valid
Art-composed music	30	33.0	33.0	33.0
Popular music	19	20.9	20.9	53.8
Traditional indigenous music	11	12.1	12.1	65.9
Skip	31	34.1	34.1	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

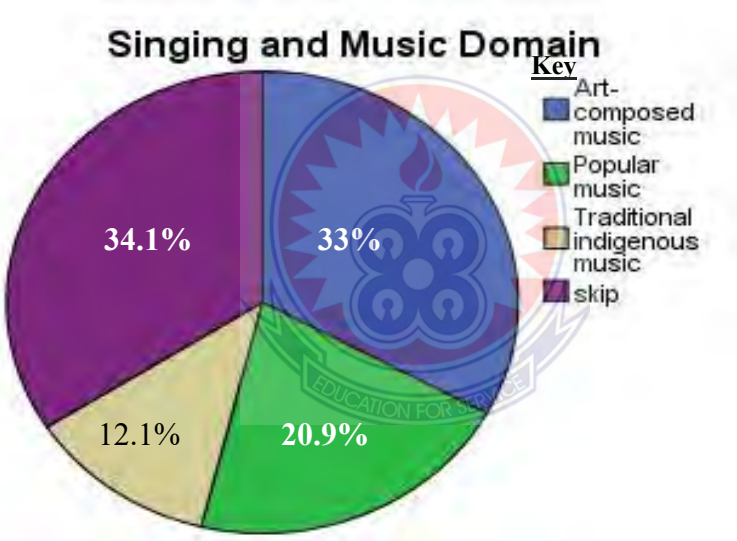

Figure 19: Singing and Music Domain

Figure 19 shows that the greater part (33.3%) of singers sang in the art music genre while 20.9% were popular music singers. Singers who sang traditional indigenous songs were only 12.1%.

Table 16: Prior Knowledge and Singing

Prior Knowledge and Influence On (Vocals) Singing	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent valid
Yes	37	40.7	40.7	40.7
No	16	17.6	17.6	58.2
Skip	38	41.8	41.8	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

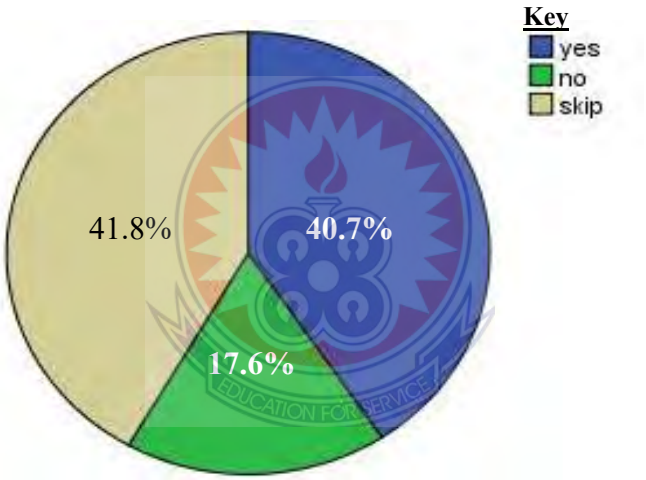

Figure 20: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Singing

Figure 20 above shows the distribution of respondents with regards to singing. Out of the total number of respondents 40.7% responded in the affirmative. However, 17.6% believed that prior knowledge had no influence on their singing. A large number of respondents (41.8%) skipped this question.

4.3 Research Question Three:

Relationship between Pre-Entry interests and Musical Competencies

The purpose of research question (3) is to find out whether or not respondents' pre entry interests have any associations with their musical abilities.

Chang 1996 highlighted the thin line between interest and motivation because he believes both are paramount to the causes of an individual's behaviour. Chiu (2007) opined that interest is innate but can be enhanced by external forces. For Lai (2010), interest manifests in personal preferences when it comes to learning thereby making people choose one thing over another. Thus the questions in this section on learners' interest were derived out of theories that suggest that interest influences learner's behaviour and choices. Our aim here is to show that learners' pre-entry interests have associations with their musical abilities.

4.3.1 Prior Interests and Competency in General Aspects of Music

In this section of the questionnaire, the students were required to respond to seven tabulated aspects of music by selecting one of the following responses; ~~h~~high interest-high prior knowledge" (HHPK), ~~h~~high interest-low prior knowledge" (LLPK), or ~~l~~low interest low prior knowledge" (LLPK). Students were not given an option to select ~~I~~don't know" or ~~u~~ndecided".

Table 17: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Composition

Composition	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
High interest- high prior knowledge(HHPK)	44	48.4	48. 4	48.4
High interest- low prior-knowledge(HLPK)	35	38.5	38.5	86.8
Low interest-low prior knowledge(LLPK)	8	8.8	8.8	95.6
Skip	4	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

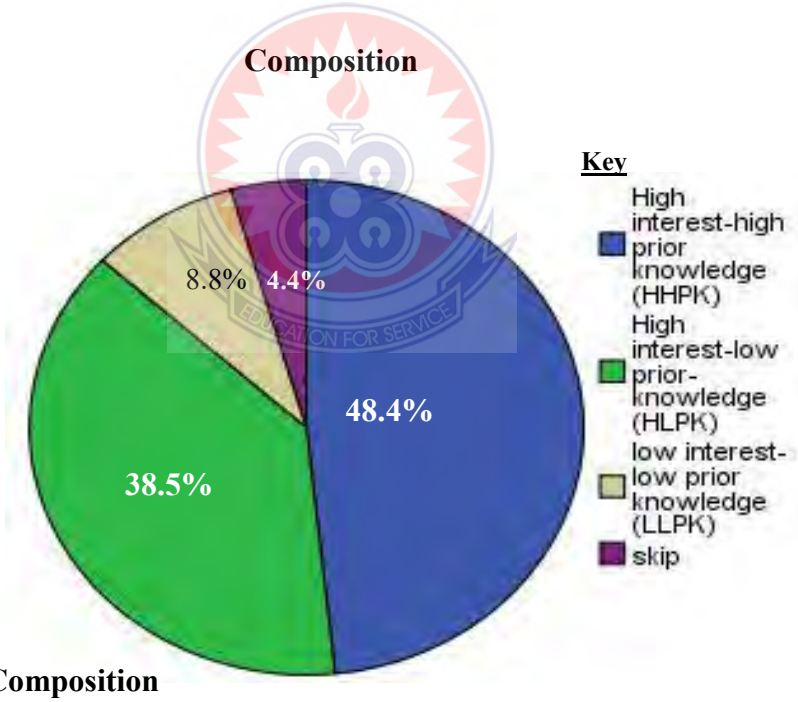

Figure 21: Composition

The greater part (42.9%) of respondents believe that high interest is associated with high prior knowledge in composition. This outcome is in line with Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001) assertion that when readers lack parallel intellectual experience with a particular material, they show little interest in such materials. This was keenly followed by HLPK (31.9%) while only 4.4% ranked LLPK.

Table 18: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Musical Performance

Musical Performance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High interest-high prior-knowledge (HL)	43	47.3	47.3	47.3
High interest-low prior-knowledge (HL)	24	26.4	26.4	73.6
Low interest-low prior knowledge (LL)	2	2.2	2.2	75.8
Skip	22	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

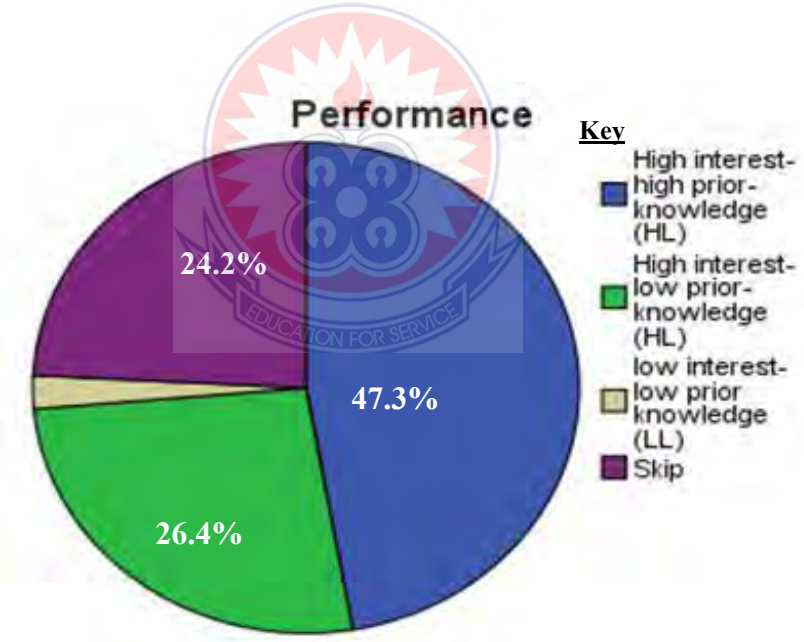

Figure 22: Performance

The greater part of respondents (47.3%) said they have high interest and high prior knowledge in musical performances, which validates Kintsch's (1980) view that contends that interest increases with high prior knowledge. However, 26.4 % also debunk Kintsch's theory by sharing that they have high interest in performance despite the presence of inadequate prior knowledge. Kintsch's theory is equally

validated by the third least group- those who ticked LLPK in performance were 2.2 % out of the total population.

Table 19: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Music Directing

Music Directing	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent Valid
High interest-high prior knowledge (HH)	40	44.0	44.0	44.0
High interest-low prior-knowledge (HL)	24	26.4	26.4	70.3
low interest-low prior knowledge (LL)	5	5.5	5.5	75.8
Skip	22	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

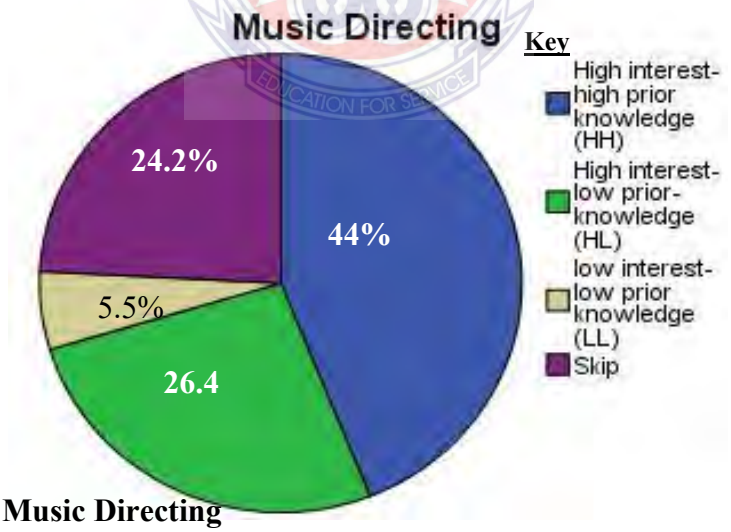

Figure 23: Music Directing

The figure above shows that greater parts of respondents (44%) have high interest and high prior knowledge in music directing. This means that many respondents have been involved in teaching and conducting choirs. In a male

dominated setting this is normal because the majority of music directors are males. 26.4% also said they possessed HHPK while only 5.5% had LLPK.

4.3.2 Prior Interests and Competency in First Year Courses

This section of the questionnaire focuses attention on the opinions that were expressed by respondents on the influence of prior knowledge on interest with regards to courses taken in the first year. The respondents were asked to respond to seven (7) level 100 music courses and select one of three options namely; ―High interest- high prior knowledge" HHPK, High interest-low prior-knowledge" HLPK or low interest-low prior knowledge" LLPK.

Table 20: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Rudiments & Theory

Rudiments & Theory	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High interest-high prior knowledge (HHPK)	46	50.5	50.5	50.5
High interest-low prior-knowledge (HLPK)	21	23.1	23.1	73.6
Low interest-low prior knowledge (LLPK)	3	3.3	3.3	76.9
Skip	21	23.1	23.1	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

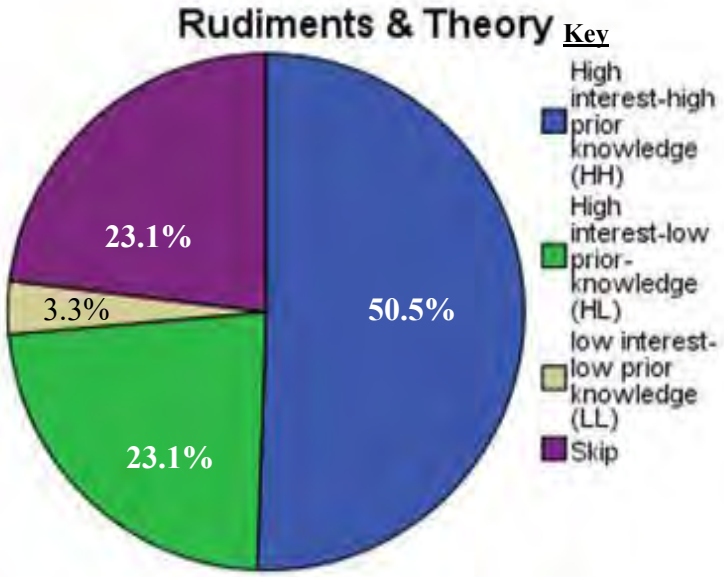

Figure 24: Rudiments and Theory

Half of the respondents (50.5%) stated that they have high interest coupled with high prior knowledge in rudiments of music. This supports Gillen (2005) who theorized that adults learn by making connections between experience and reflection. HLPK learners formed 21% while LLPK views were only 3%. Sadly, about a quarter of respondents (21%) chose not to react to this inquiry.

Table 21: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Music Technology

Music Technology	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent Cumulative
High interest-high prior knowledge (HHPK)	33	36.3	36.3	36.3
High interest-low prior-knowledge (HLPK)	30	33.0	33.0	69.2
Low interest-low prior knowledge (LLPK)	5	5.5	5.5	74.7
Skip	23	25.3	25.3	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

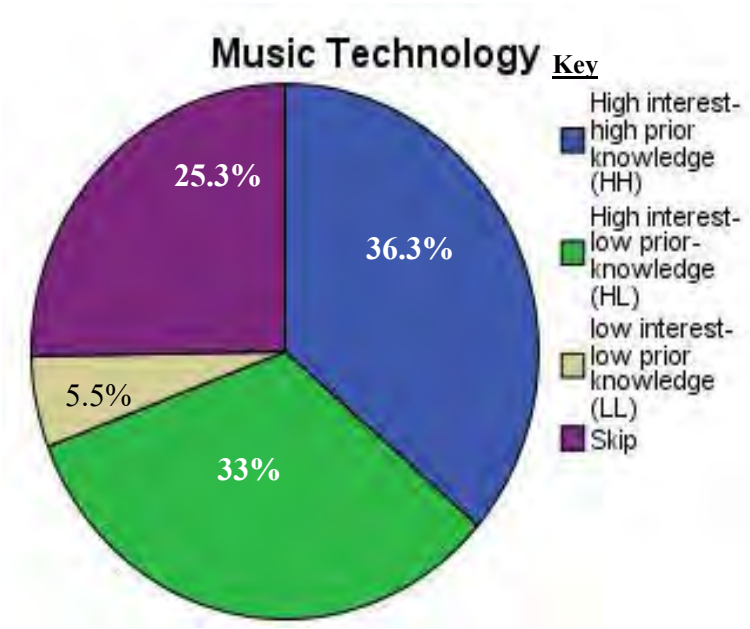

Figure 25: Music Technology

Figure 25 shares that a little over a quarter of respondents (36.3%) said that they have high interest-high prior knowledge in music technology. HHPK was followed closely by HLPK who were 33%. Again LLPK scored the least with only 5.5%. Respondents who failed to answer this question were many (25.3%).

Table 22: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Music Literature

Music Literature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High interest-high prior Knowledge	20	22.0	22.0	22.0
High interest-low prior-Knowledge	30	33.0	33.0	54.9
Low interest-low prior Knowledge	14	15.4	15.4	70.3
Skip	27	29.7	29.7	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

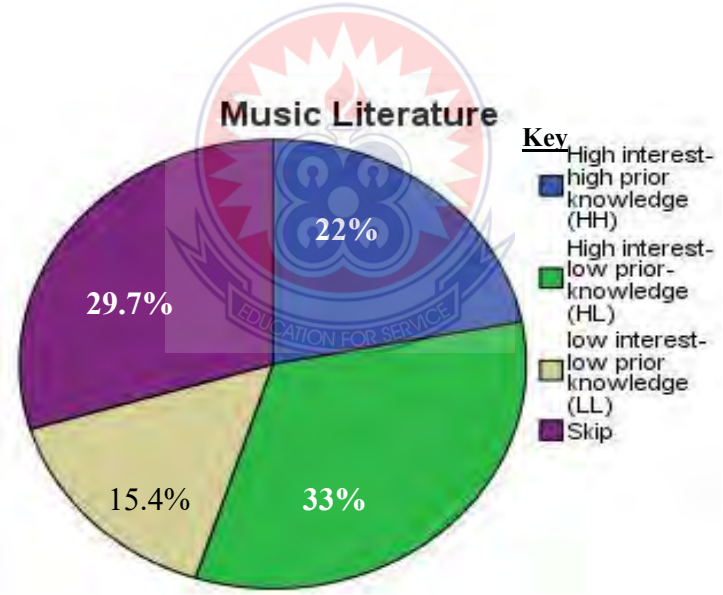

Figure 26: Music Literature

From Figure 26 only 22 % representing less than a quarter of the total number of respondents opined that they have high interest high prior knowledge in Music Literature. This figure is a departure from the usual trend of responses where HHPK is ranked the most, followed by HLPK views. This time round, those participants who ticked –High interest but low prior-knowledge" in reading courses in Music education were in the majority with 33%. This implies that 33% of the participants were highly

motivated in reading courses like Musical Styles and Communication Skills but they had little prior knowledge; a position which disagrees with the views of Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001), who discovered that readers exhibit little interest in reading materials when they lack related intellectual experiences. Another implication is that respondents had little to do with reading music literature prior to entering UEW. LLPK was the least because it formed 15.4% in number while skipped ranked 29.7%.

Table 23: Prior Knowledge and Influence on Aural & Sight

Aural & Sight	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High interest-high prior Knowledge	31	34.1	34.1	34.1
High interest-low prior Knowledge	29	31.9	31.9	65.9
Low interest-low prior Knowledge	2	2.2	2.2	68.1
Skip	29	31.9	31.9	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

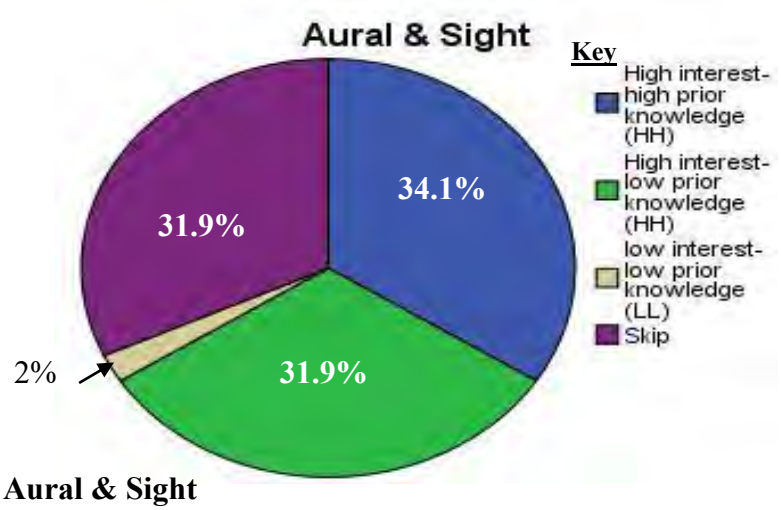

Figure 27: Aural & Sight

Out of the total number of respondents, 34.1 % said they had high interest-high prior knowledge in –aural and sight-reading". According to Harb & El-Shaarawi (2006) when teaching styles are matched with learners' natural methods of enquiry academic achievement would rise. In this case learners who learn best through either aural or sight or both are likely to gain more credits in Aural and Sight course at UEW. This group is closely followed by HLPK who scored 31.9 % as LLPK as usual recorded the least with 2.2%. Here too one-third 2.2% of the total number of respondents did not react to this inquiry.

Table 24: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Interest

Prior Learning And Increased Interest	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (SA)	57	62.6	62.6	62.6
Agree (A)	23	25.3	25.3	87.9
Disagree (D)	2	2.2	2.2	90.1
Skip	9	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

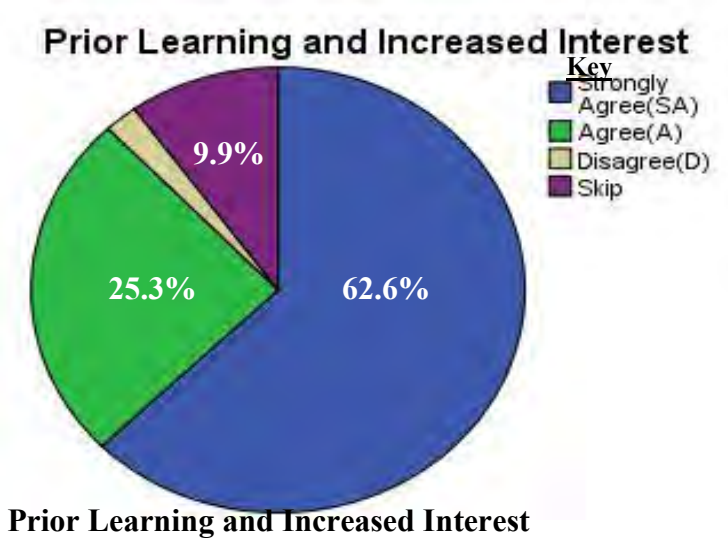

Figure 28: Prior Learning and Increased Interest

With these inquiry respondents were asked to express their opinion on the link between personal interests and previous learning. Reacting to the above statement, more than half of respondents (62.6%) stated that their prior knowledge has sparked interest in courses that reflect their previous learning. 25.3% out of the total number of respondents supported this view. Those who disagreed with this opinion were only 2.2% while another 9.9% failed to respond to this question.

4.3.3 Prior Learning Styles and Musical Competencies

Felder (1993) established that learners understand and recall better when instructors‘ instructional style matches learners learning styles. Neil Flemming (2011) equally developed a four -part system of learning styles. These two theorists have influenced the designing of the various statements that were used to generate tables and charts to answer the research questions. Here respondents were required to react to statements based on their own experiences and personal opinions about the academic experience of course mates.

The students were asked to tick the most relevant response in the boxes at the right side of each statement thus: agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagree.

Table 25: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Visual Learners

Prior Learning and Visual Learners	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (SA)	18	19.8	19.8	19.8
Agree(A)	18	19.8	19.8	39.6
Disagree (D)	27	29.7	29.7	69.2
Strongly disagree (SD)	17	18.7	18.7	87.9
Skip	11	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

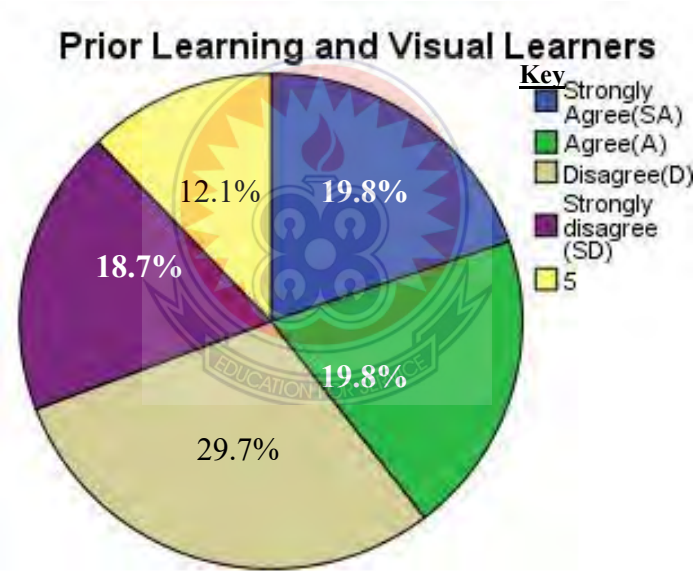

Figure 29: Prior Learning and Visual Learners

Here respondents were required to respond to this statement ―visual learners are losing interest in their music programmes.‖ 19.8 % of respondents asserted that visual learners are strongly losing interest in their respective programmes.

―I learn best when I picture sentences in a pictorial form for better understanding‖.

The statement above validates Neil Flemming‘s (2011) theory that some students learn best with visual rather words.

Table 26: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Aural Learners

Prior Learning and Aural Learners	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree(SA)	19	20.9	20.9	20.9
Agree(A)	24	26.4	26.4	47.3
Disagree(D)	24	26.4	26.4	73.6
Strongly disagree(SD)	11	12.1	12.1	85.7
Skip	13	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

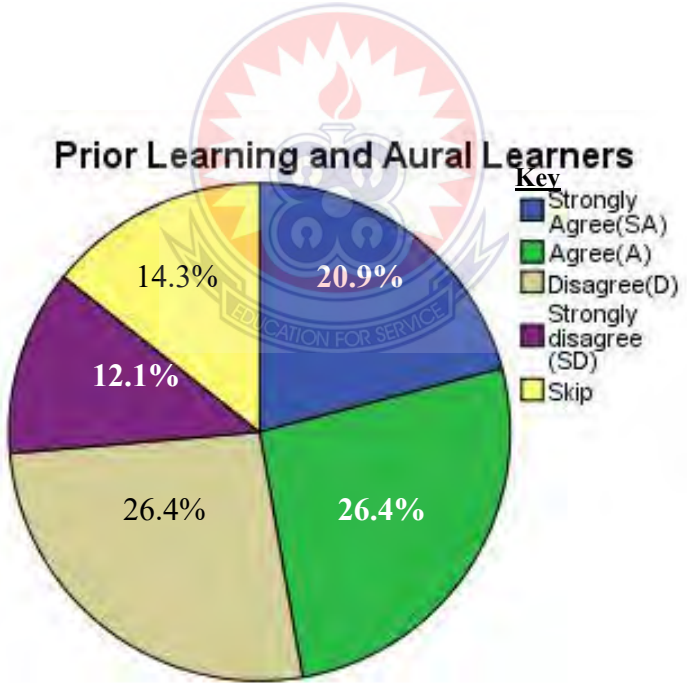

Figure 30: Musical Instruments Competency

Here respondents were required to react to this statement –Visual learners are losing interest in their programmes". From the figure above it is evident that 20.9% did not agree that visual learners were losing interest. This view was supported by 26.4% of respondents. A little over a quarter (26.4%) affirmed that visual learners

have lost interest in music education. This view had 12.1% of respondents to support them. The skip section for this enquiry ranked 14.3%. It is clear from the results that all respondents at least believe that some students learn best with words and listening thereby validating Neil Flemming's four-part classification of learners.

Table 27: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Kinaesthetic Learners

Prior Learning and Kinaesthetic Learners	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree(SA)	12	13.2	13.2	13.2
Agree(A)	24	26.4	26.4	39.6
Disagree(D)	25	27.5	27.5	67.0
Strongly disagree(SA)	12	13.2	13.2	80.2
Skip	18	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

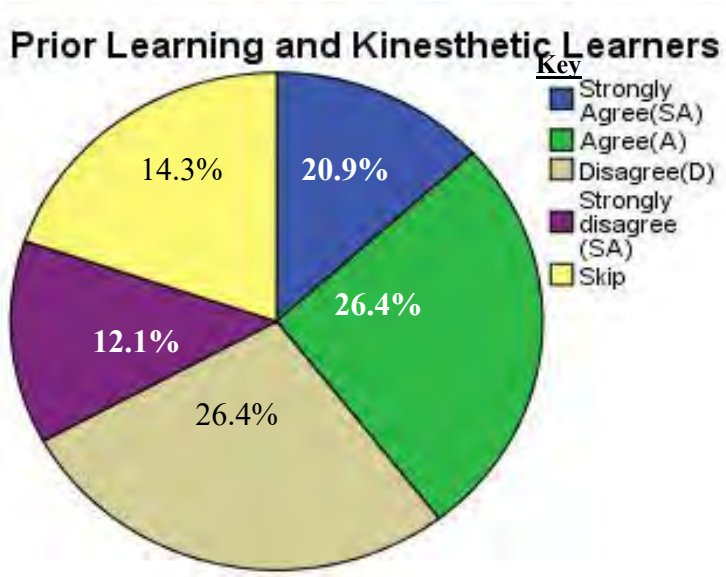

Figure 31: Prior Learning and Kinesthetic Learners

Neil Flemming contended that some learners prefer to fiddle things rather than to sit and listen. At this point I insert a statement given by a respondent in keyboard skills of research question one (1) of the questionnaire because I think it can fit here:

―I find it hard and uneasy to sit behind the keyboard but I am trying hard and hope to master it before completion of my course at UEW".

The figure above suggests that 13.2% of respondents were of the view that ―kinaesthetic learners" had lost interest; a position supported by 26.4% of respondents. 13.2% of respondents totally agreed that kinaesthetic learners' needs are being met; supporters of this view ranked 27.5%. For this question 19.8 % of respondents failed to react.

Table 28: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Read/Write Learners

Prior Learning And Read/Write Learners	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (SA)	31	34.1	34.1	34.1
Agree(A)	24	26.4	26.4	60.4
Disagree (D)	14	15.4	15.4	75.8
Strongly disagree(SD)	2	2.2	2.2	78.0
Skip	20	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

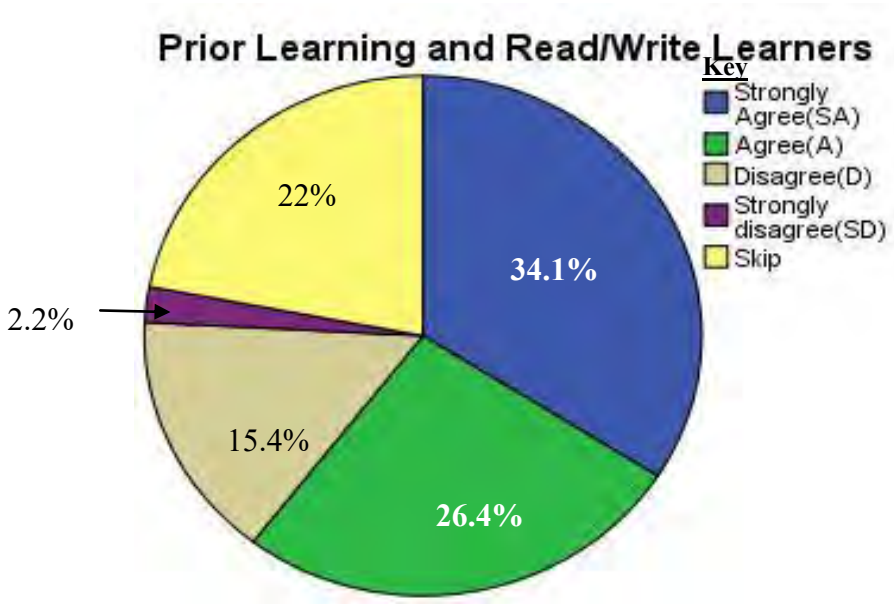

Figure 32: Prior Learning and Read/Write Learners

Figure 28 is about a quarter of respondents (34.1%) believed strongly those students who learn by reading and writing reflected high levels of interest in music education. Reacting to the above statement, only 2.2% of respondents disagreed. 15.4% out of the total number of respondents supported this view. Sadly, almost a quarter of respondents (22%) failed to respond to this question.

Table 29: Influence of Prior Knowledge on Major Instruments

Prior Learning and Major Instruments	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree(SA)	42	46.2	46.2	46.2
Agree(A)	21	23.1	23.1	69.2
Disagree(D)	8	8.8	8.8	78.0
Strongly disagree(SD)	6	6.6	6.6	84.6
Skip	14	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

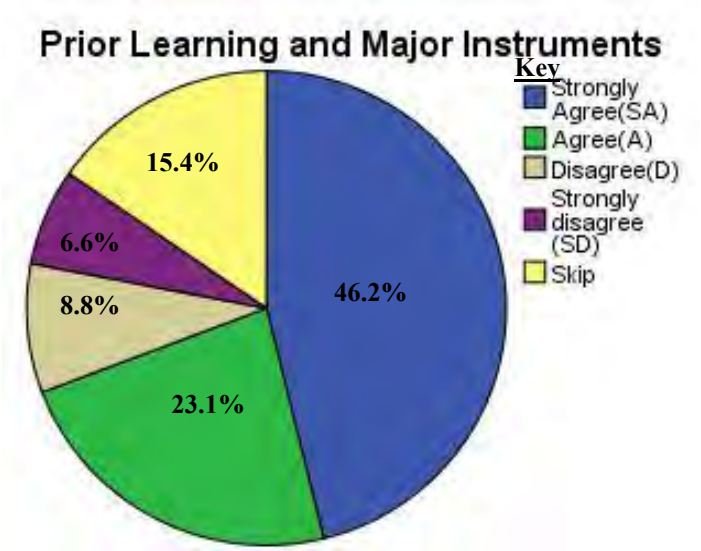

Figure 33: Musical Instruments Competency

Figure 33 attempts to show the association between respondents' choice of principal instruments with the presence or lack of prior knowledge on that particular instrument. Figure 29 above shows that almost half of respondents (46.2%) chose their principal instrument based on their previous instrumental knowledge. This viewpoint was supported by 23.1% of respondents. Those who disagreed to this statement were only 6.6% and were supported by less than a quarter of respondents (15.4%).

4.4. Research Question Four

On musical meaning creation

This section of the questionnaire analyzed students' responses to sixteen statements. They were to indicate whether they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The enquiries solicited in this section were made with the constructivist theory of learning in mind. I attempted to find out the ways students of Level 100 music students' new music-related meanings.

Table 30: Creation of New Musical Meaning

Prior-Knowledge and New Information	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree(SA)	45	49.5	49.5	49.5
Agree(A)	14	15.4	15.4	64.8
Disagree(D)	5	5.5	5.5	70.3
Strongly disagree (SD)	1	1.1	1.1	71.4
Skip	26	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

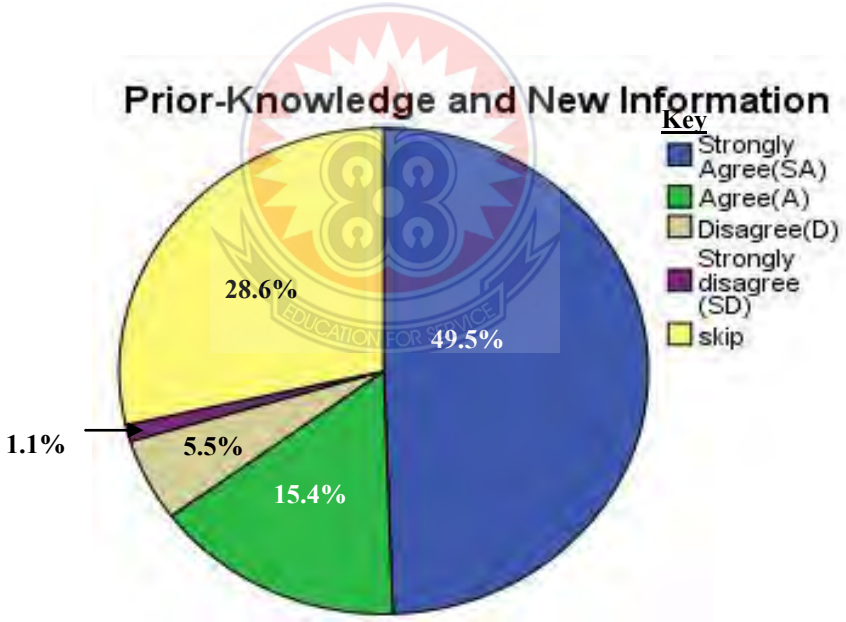

Figure 34: Musical Instruments Competency

Figure 34 shows that only 1% of respondents do not relate new information to previous knowledge when attempting to create new musical meaning. More than half of the total number of respondents (49.5%) said they actually depend on previous knowledge when they come in contact with new musical information. This supports the view of constructivists like Brunner (1961) and Von Glasersfeld (1990) theorized

that learners, through cognition, organize and make meaning out of their experiences by themselves. In this case respondents validated these theories by making cognitive references with their previous knowledge. Respondents who seconded this viewpoint were 15.4%, which is greater than the rank of those who strongly disagreed (1.1%) and participants who only disagreed (5.5%).

Table 31: Creation of New Musical Meaning

Prior-Knowledge and Instrumental References	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (SA)	35	38.5	38.5	38.5
Agree(A)	30	33.0	33.0	71.4
Disagree(D)	1	1.1	1.1	72.5
Skip	25	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

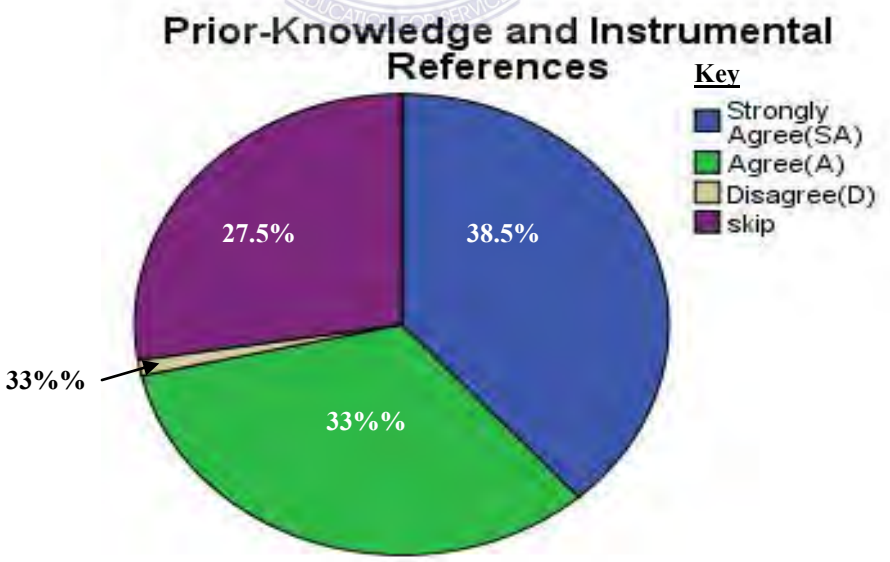

Figure 35: Prior Knowledge and Instrumental References

Figure 35 above shows that almost half of respondents (38.5%) make cognitive references to musical instruments in order to create new concepts in music. Since I know the length and breadth of the instrument, I am able to understand and apply theories.

This is a reaction from a keyboard player who appears to make references to the keyboard in other to create more understanding out of new concepts. A quarter of respondents (33%) agreed with this viewpoint while only 1.1% disagreed. Those who skipped were equally large (27.5%). This supports Gillen's assertion in 2005 that adults learn by making connections to reference. In this case various musical instruments will serve as the objects for referencing.

Table 32: New Musical Meaning during demonstrations

New Concept and Demonstrations.	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree(SA)	44	48.4	48.4	48.4
Agree(A)	14	15.4	15.4	63.7
Disagree(D)	4	4.4	4.4	68.1
Skip	29	31.9	31.9	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

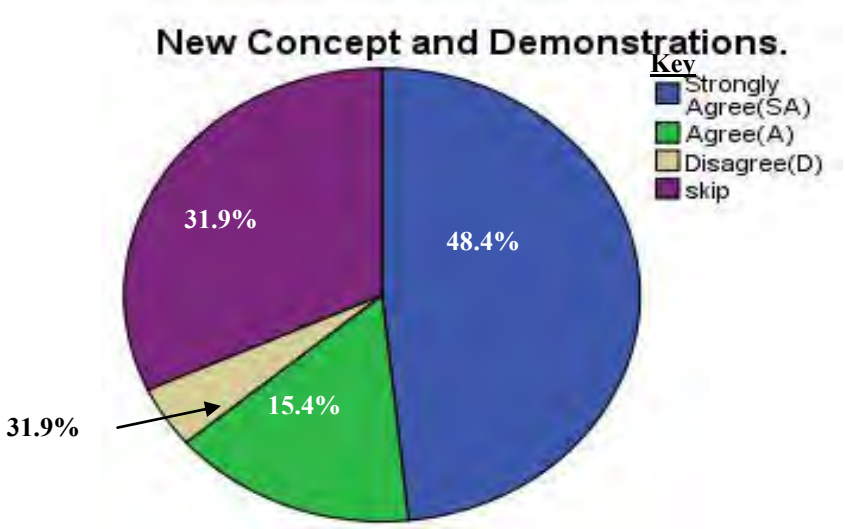

Figure 36: New Concept and Demonstrations

Figure 36 above predicts that the majority of respondents (48.4%%) learn best with demonstrations. Respondents who share this view agree with Agordoh (1994) who stated that musical knowledge is acquired in Africa through imitation (observation) and participation. This view is supported by 15.4% of respondents who share similar views but with lesser convictions. The chart reveals that only 4.4% of the respondents do not learn much from observations. Unfortunately, 31.9% of respondents declined from answering this question.

Table 33: New Musical Meaning through Instructor's assistance

New Meaning And Instructor's Assistance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (SA)	16	17.6	17.6	17.6
Agree (A)	12	13.2	13.2	30.8
Disagree (D)	25	27.5	27.5	58.2
Strongly disagree(SD)	14	15.4	15.4	73.6
Skip	24	26.4	26.4	100.0
Total	**91**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

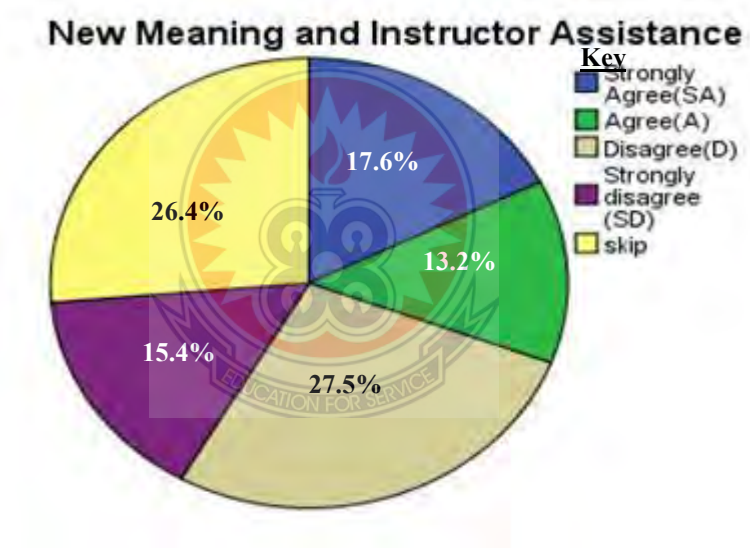

Figure 37: New Meaning and Instructor Assistance

From the figure above it is clear that respondents who create new musical understanding by themselves are more (27.5%) than respondents who depend solely on instructors' instructions to understand new concepts. The former view supports the constructivist learning model where learners play active roles in the creation of new meaning. The results also show that 17.6% strongly depend on their instructors. However, 26.4 % of respondents gave no answer to this inquiry.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to answer each research question from the viewpoint of respondents who have begun tertiary music study and are expected to have acquired basic prior knowledge that is relevant to each programme. The findings for research question one reveal that respondents have prior musical experiences in both instrumental and non-instrumental related music activities. Furthermore, prior Instrumental skills were found in all instrument families including the keyboard and voice with string players forming the majority. Another major finding is that more than half of respondents were acquainted with playing musical instruments with both ~~–s~~ight" and ~~–e~~ar". Even though the level of respondents' abilities to sight-read and play by ear were not ascertained, it possible that such respondents will become versatile instrumentalists. However, respondents who play by ear outnumbered those who played by sight-reading. Many of the comments in this instrumentalist section of the questionnaire revealed that those who play by ear were suddenly awakened to the need to develop their sight reading skills. However, no student with prior knowledge in sight-reading expressed the need to develop high aural skills. This suggests that sight-reading is highly used above other methods during instrumental courses at the UEW music department.

After gaining a good picture of respondents' prior learning, I then set out to find out whether prior knowledge has any links with musical competencies of students. Apart from reading courses in music, respondents' views about research question two were equivocal. In reaction to the above premise, the majority of respondents were of the view that their backgrounds have connotations with their musical abilities.

At this point I use Classical and Jazz genres to highlight the divergence that exists between musical competencies which is as a result of different approaches to the study of the same instrument. This is a factor worth considering during course design, its implementation and evaluation of students.

In classical music, creativity is the preoccupation of its composers while the performer only attempts to implement the thoughts of the composer. When the work of a composer is performed the performers do not demonstrate creativity, rather they try their best to bring the composers inspiration into fruition. A glance at jazz textbooks reveal that Jazz music allows the performers to create and perform simultaneously to the extent that even when performers play from score, they are at liberty to creatively add their own interpretations to the piece of music.

Consequently, Jazz education places emphasis on inculcating improvisation skills in learners by teaching learners to practice technical exercises for agility, scales for –soloing" and chord progressions for the left hand. Even though classical and jazz share technical exercises in common, factors such as approach, emphasis, and frequency differentiates the two. Another difference is that the classical genre concentrates on building repertoire while jazz celebrates on- the-spot creativity.

I conclude by reflecting upon the findings from this study to hypothesize the relationship between background knowledge and learner's musical competencies thus:

1. **Referential**: This is the relationship that compels adult learners to make references to an object or an experience with the intention to gain a better understanding of what is being taught. For example, in this study many respondents cited making references to musical instruments.

2. **Accelerative**: Here the relationship confers positive benefits to the learner by the supply of essences, patterns and ―knowings" that immediately amplify a person's musical ability. An example is the respondent who was able to apply new concepts in music rapidly and easily on the keyboard through self-discovery.
3. **Augmentative**: This relationship works just like the accelerative relationship. The only difference here is that the benefit of the relationship is evident in at most two areas of music and prior expertise cannot yet be transferred to every other musical competency.
4. **Diminutive**: This is the exact opposite of accelerative relationship because the learners' musical background supplies meanings that decrease a person's expression or transference of previous knowledge. An example is when people sing out of key but are not aware themselves that they are singing out of tune.
5. **Familiarity**: This is the situation where learner's musical background matches with the new concept being learnt. Such learners will exhibit much buoyancy just because they possess experiences that converge with new musical information/skill. Such students may even become overconfident and fail to study new dimensions of what they already know.
6. **Aesthetic:** This is a relationship where prior knowledge influences a person's musical tastes to the extent that this person takes decisions based on these preferences. This relationship can be inferred in music lovers who seek for environments that celebrate and amplify their personal tastes in music.

This type of relationship occurs when a person suddenly finds pleasure in a music genre that was hitherto considered to be unpleasant.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this research study is to explore the relationships that lie between prior knowledge and musical abilities. Having a greater understanding of how prior knowledge can affect learner‘s interest is also crucial for this study because studies have shown that interest affects academic achievement. Becoming enlightened about one‘s own musical background will assist new learners to understand their own musical behaviour. This goes to say that students‘ behaviour in music education can be traced and understood better by a good appreciation of their pre-tertiary musical activities.

Before the above can be achieved, music educators must first of all gain a good insight into learners‘ background experience so that they can be in a better position to understand and even predict students‘ academic behavior by the use of tried and tested theories. This concern has been addressed by asking the questions, what musical competencies do beginning students possess? What relationships exist between prior knowledge and students‘ music abilities? By what ways do music students construct new musical meaning? An extensive literature review was used to synthesize information and focus on these research questions. The analysis produced major findings that are summarized below.

5.1 Summary

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between prior knowledge and musical competencies at UEW.

Having a greater understanding of how prior knowledge can affect learner‘s interest is important for students because it will help new learners to diagnose their own prejudices against some music courses and help them gain understanding into how their

background influences their interests and consequently their musical abilities in long and short term.

Without a thorough understanding of new learners‘ musical backgrounds music educators will not be able to comprehend the effects of learner‘s background on their musical behaviour and subsequently their academic output.

Before the above goal can be achieved, music departments must first of all carefully seek out information on learner‘s background experiences. By so doing, music educators can be in a better position to comprehend the effects of learners‘ background on their academic behavior which should include how learners relate new musical concepts to previously acquired knowledge in their quest to enact new musical conceptualizations.

These concerns have been addressed by asking the questions; what is the range of prior knowledge that beginning students possess? In what ways do new learners create new musical meanings? To what extent does their respective musical backgrounds influence academic work and personal interests? Based on the suspicion that all learners possess background knowledge in various forms, all 117 level 100 students of UEW‘s music department of the 2016/17 academic year was chosen to serve as the population for this study who reacted to both open ended and closed ended questions on a mixed questionnaire to address the research problems.

An extensive literature review was used to synthesize information and answer the research questions. The analysis produced major findings that are summarized below.

All participants were asked to respond to all four research questions by ticking the most appropriate answer from the multiple choice questions or ―true‖ or ―false‖ questions. Additionally, respondents were allowed to give their opinions on

statements that were coined based on research questions three and four by ticking in boxes at the right side of the respective statements. Furthermore, provision was made for participants to supplement each research question with brief explanations.

With respect to musical competencies among respondents, inquiries were based on two groups namely instrumentalists background and non- instrumentalists' musical backgrounds. Respondents were required to choose from six (6) categories of musical instruments namely strings, brass, woodwinds, percussions, keyboards and voice. Further questions were asked to ascertain the duration of experience in all the areas outlined above in addition to inquiries whose end was to give insight into the type of African music performed by respondents of this year group.

Having set the tone for the enquiries with the first research question, participants were now asked to offer their opinions on the influence of their prior learning on clearly defined arrears of musical background.

In this light, respondents were asked to give information about the influence of their prior-knowledge on their levels of interest in seven (7) comprehensive aspects of the music profession by ticking in a box next to these areas. Finally, they were asked to cite the methods they employ to create viable musical meanings.

5.2 Conclusions

The musical abilities of respondents were examined with the help of research problem one. Following respondents' disclosure about their prior musical competencies in the six families of musical instruments, string players emerged first followed by brass and then voice. Since each instrument group was well represented in the population it is means there is variety in the instrumental make-up of respondents in this year group.

With respect to respondents whose prior experience in music was in areas other than instrumental playing, choir directors ranked first followed closely by composers. Since many respondents have experience in choral directing, it is important that their entry skills in all aspects of choir directing be examined at the start of the programme to assist educators to diagnose strengths and weaknesses and map out strategies for further development in all aspect of chorale music directing.

On the influence of prior knowledge on musical competencies (theory and practical) many students admitted that their prior learning had enhanced personal progress in ~~–s~~peed" and ~~–a~~ccuracy" on specific musical instruments being studied in the UEW music programme.

The third research objective sought to verify Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman's (2001) discovery that learners showed little interest in reading materials when they lacked related prior knowledge. The results confirmed this hypothesis since about two-thirds of respondents strongly agreed that prior learning does increase learners' interests. More also when considering Fleming's VARKR model advanced in 1987, respondents were asked to give their opinions on the influence of prior knowledge on these Flemmings' learning styles. The results showed that the all four (4) learning styles were present among respondents. Despite these positive correlations, results disclosed that visual, aural, and read/write learners were losing interest in music study more than their kinesthetic counterparts.

If we consider the creation of new meaning from Piaget's (1952) perspective, it will be required of learners to relate new information with previous learning in other to generate links that foster understanding. Consequently, my fourth research question sought to test this theory by asking questions that enable participants to disclose the processes by which new concepts are understood in both theory and practical courses.

When asked to give their opinion on the above, half of respondents (49.5%) equivocally shared that they do depend on their previous learning when trying to fathom new concepts: only a handful (6.6%) of respondents did not support Paget's theory of schema. This positive response runs through the answers given by respondents on selected teaching methods namely demonstrations and observations.

Finally, on new musical meaning and instructor input, respondents who create meaning by themselves were found to be more (27.5%) than those who solely depended on instructors (17.6%). This finding is in support of constructivism because they believe that learners play active roles in their personal construction of knowledge.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as a result of the insight gained from this research:

1. Given the dynamic nature of society, regular studies based on this model would document trends in music from the perspective of all music practitioners and not only students' subjective views about their prior musical experiences.
2. Since some respondents claim that teaching and learning does not match their learning preferences, further study will be needed to investigate this situation followed by well-informed recommendations.
3. Research related to estimating the level of competencies of new learners using dynamic evaluative tools will be useful in a longitudinal study, which will strive to document the impact of a music curriculum on clearly identifiable categories of learners.

4. Given that this study provides a basis for concluding that prior knowledge actually affects academic work, initiatives such as UEW‘s music camp should be used to establish a uniform musical background for music learners thereby mitigating discrepancies in both the quantity and quality of prior knowledge that exists within tertiary music classrooms in Africa.
5. Subsequent studies on musical backgrounds should add interviews to other data collection methods where remarkable responses are probed further to gain more insight on learners‘ previous learning.
6. Music departments should employ collaborative background assessment policies every academic year to ensure that educators receive the support they need for effective activation of learner‘s backgrounds.
7. Music Educators should constantly remind themselves using charts on the range of musical backgrounds within each year group and should dynamically utilize and channel learner‘s cumulative musical experiences towards meeting the expectations of both the institution and its learner all in the same breath.
8. Since many respondents verbalised prior experiences in both western and traditional African music, curriculum revisions should consider designing courses that seek to unite western music with traditional music in both scholarly and practical approaches.
9. In order for music departments to be able to capture the diversity in learners‘ musical backgrounds, new courses for programmes like BMUS and DMUS, should consider musical genres and musical competencies (classical Performance, composition, Jazz Performance, Popular Music) in course designs.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

The purpose of this survey is to investigate the musical competencies of first year students of the 2016/17 year group of the music department of the University of Education, Winneba. The survey is strictly confidential and voluntary. Participants will remain anonymous. Your participation and cooperation is very much appreciated.

SECTION A

Section A: Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age range in years:

   a. Less than 30 [ ]

   b. 40-50 [ ]

   c. 30-40 [ ]

   d. 50 & above [ ]

3. Educational Qualification

a. HND [ ]

b. SHS certificate [ ]

c. First degree in other fields apart from music [ ]

d. Entrance examined [ ]

SECTION B:

Questions in this section are in four main categories indicated by alphabets from a to d. However, section A has been divided into two parts, A1 and A2.

A1. ***Musical Competencies****: Instrumentalists only*

Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box

1. Which musical instruments were you playing?
    a. Woodwinds[ ]
    b. Brass[ ]
    c. Strings[ ]
    d. Percussion[ ]
    e. Voice[ ]

Please write the name of the instrument(s)you can play below.

……

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……

2. Please select the exact aspect of singing you were involved in.
    a. Lead vocalist[ ]
    b. Backing vocalist[ ]
    c. Soprano singer[ ]
    d. Alto singer[ ]
    e. Tenor singer[ ]
    f. Bass singer [ ]
    g. I don‘t know the part I sing [ ]

3. How long have you been playing your instrument?

   a. 0-5 months [ ]

   b. 5-10 months [ ]

   c. 10-15 months [ ]

   d. 15 months and above

4. In what idiom did you play your instrument?

   a. Purely African idiom[ ]

   b. Purely Western idiom[ ]

   c. A combination of both[ ]

5. What type of music do you play your instrument in?

   a. Art-composed music [ ]

   b. Traditional-indigenous ensembles [ ]

   c. Popular music [ ]

Which of the following statements best describes how you've been playing your instrument.

   a. Improvisation: I create music on the spot.

   b. Accompaniment: I play to support another instrument

   c. I play from score

   d. I play by ear

   e. I use both

6. How did you learn to play the musical instrument?

   A) Self-taught through trial and error [ ]

   B) Taught by friends who play themselves [ ]

C) Taught by a teacher[ ]

D) If none of the above then specify

……

……

……

7. Do you perform before an audience?

   A) Yes [ ]

   B) No[ ]

8. If yes, how many times do you perform in a week before an audience?

   a) 1-2 times per week[ ]

   b) 2-3 times per week[ ]

   c) 3-4 times per week[ ]

   d) 4-7 times in a week.[ ]

9. What is your level of proficiency on your instrument(s)?

   a. Beginner [ ]

   b. Average [ ]

   c. Advanced [ ]

10. If you are a beginner, kindly specify how long you have been learning your instrument here

11. Others: provide any other relevant information on this subject above in the space provided below

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A2. *Musical competencies*: *Non-instrumentalists*

Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box

1. In what ways were you involved with music?
   a. Composition[ ]
   b. Sound set-up[ ]
   c. Classroom Music teaching[ ]
   e. Conducting [ ]
   f. Choir teaching[ ]
   g. Dancing[ ]
   h. Choreography[ ]
   i. Music business[ ]
   j. Other(s)……..

2. What is your estimation of your in the field(s) you have selected in question one.

a. Beginner [ ]
b. Intermediate[ ]
c. Expert [ ]
d. Other (specify)……

1. Kindly indicate your length of time in your field(s) of music.
   a. 0-1 year
   b. 1-5 years
   c. 5-10 years
   d. 10 years and above

2. Others: provide any other relevant information on this subject above in the space provided below:

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B. *Relationship between prior-knowledge and musical competencies.*

1. Influence of prior-knowledge on ***keyboard skills*** *programme. Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box*

i. I knew how to play the keyboard before I started the keyboard skills course.

ii. My previous learning about the keyboard has enhanced my progress on the instrument. True [ ] false [ ]

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less mistakes,)

……

……

……

……

3. Influence of prior-knowledge on woodwind instruments (atenteben, clarinet, saxophone, etc). *Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box*

i. I knew how to play a ***woodwind*** instrument prior to this programme.

True [ ] false [ ]

If true kindly provide the name of the instrument…….

ii. My previous learning about my instrument has enhanced my progress on the instrument. True/false

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less mistakes,)

……

……

Influence of prior-knowledge on ***string instrumentalists*** (guitar, violin, etc).*Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box*

i. I knew how to play some string instruments prior to this programme.

True [ ] false [ ]

If true kindly provide the name of the instrument…….

ii. My previous learning about my instrument has enhanced my progress on the instrument. True [ ] false [ ]

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less mistakes,)

……

……

3. Influence of prior-knowledge on ***brass instrumentalists*** (trumpet, trombone, etc), *Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box*

i. I knew how to play a brass instrument prior to this programme.

True [ ] false [ ]

If true kindly provide the name of the instrument…….

ii. My previous learning about my instrument has enhanced my progress on the instrument. True [ ] false [ ]

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less fingering mistakes, breathe control)

4. Influence of prior-knowledge on percussions (side drum, conga, local drums like Atumpan,).

Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box.

i. I knew how to play a percussion instrument prior to this programme. True [ ] False[ ]

If true kindly provide the name of the instrument……..…….

ii. My previous learning about my instrument has enhanced my progress on the instrument.

True [ ] False [ ]

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less mistakes, playing in time)

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5. *Influence of prior-knowledge on **vocal proficiency*** (soprano, baritone, bass, etc

Please place a tick (√) in the appropriate box

i. I knew how to sing prior to this programme.

True [ ] False [ ]

I performed as a singer in:

a. Art-composed music [ ]

b. Popular music [ ]

c. Traditional indigenous music [ ]

ii. My previous learning about my instrument has enhanced my progress on the instrument. True [ ] false [ ]

If true, briefly explain how, (speed, accuracy, less mistakes,)

……

……

Size of performances

I. I have being performing before audience prior to this programme. True/false

II. I performed with others. True [ ] False [ ]

If true, specify the number of performers below

a. 1- 3

b. 3-5

c. 5-8

d. 8 and above

6. Others: provide any other relevant information on this subject above in the space provided below:

……

……

C. *Influence of prior- learning on interest.*

1. In the table below indicate your level of interest in each aspect of music. Please indicate whether you have High interest-high prior knowledge (HH), High interest- low prior-knowledge(HL), low interest-low prior knowledge (LL) against the aspect of music below by putting a tick ( ) once for each area.

SN	Aspect	HH	HL	LL
1	Composition			
2	Song writing			
3	Studio producer			
4	Performance			
5	Music teaching			
6	Instrumentation			
7	Music directing			

2. In the table below indicate your level of interest in each first year course.

Please indicate whether you have High interest-high prior knowledge (HH), High interest-low prior-knowledge(HL), low interest-low prior knowledge (LL) against the courses below by putting a tick ( ) once for each course.

SN	Course	HH	HL	LL
1	Rudiments & Theory			
2	Applied			
3	Music technology			
4	Music Literature			
5	Aural & Sight			
6	Principal Instrument			
7	Elementary harmony			

3. Please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A), Disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) against the statements below by putting a tick ( ) once for each statement.

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	My prior learning has increased my interest in this programme				
2	My prior learning has decreased my interest in this programme				
3	Prior-learning can influence student interest in this music programme				
4	Students who learn best by visuals are losing interest in this programme				
5	Aural learners seem interested in this programme				
6	Kinesthetic learners are no longer interested in this programme				
7	Read/write learners reflect high levels of interest				
8	I don‘t like some courses because I have no prior knowledge				
9	I chose my principal instrument based on my prior learning.				
10	I loose interest in courses or lessons that do not reflect my prior knowledge				
11	I show more in courses that reflect my prior learning				

4. Others: provide any other relevant information on this subject above in the space provided below

……

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D. To explore the ways beginners create new musical understanding.

1. Please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A), Disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) against the statements below by putting a tick ( ) once for each statement.

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	
1	I relate new information to my prior knowledge to create new understanding					
2	I make references to my musical instrument when processing new musical information					
3	I learn best when the pace of the instructor is slow					
4	I always compare new information with what I already know.					
5	I learn best when I can hear the thing in my head					
6	I learn best when I can see the thing on the board or a musical instrument					
7	I learn best when I manipulate new material					
8	I learn best when I make my own notes					
9	I learn faster when I have prior-knowledge on a topic					
10	I attempt to explore the relationships between new units of music					
11	I learn new understanding as I perform					
12	I prefer to discover new concepts by myself					
13	I learn best by demonstrations					
14	I learn best when I observe a phenomenon in its natural environment					
15	I learn best in small groups than large groups					
16	I totally depend on an instructor to construct new meaning					

4. Others: provide any other relevant information on this subject above in the space provided below:

……

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……

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION