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## Ashdance Pedagogy: A Culturally Contextualised Strategy for Musical Instruction

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**Abstract**

The study was an investigation into Ashanti musical types to unearth distinctive pedagogical strategies that could be formalised for teaching music in Ghana and the globe consequently. It highlighted a development and establishment of a pedagogical concept called Ashdance pedagogy, etymologically coined from the terms, Ashanti and Dances. The study became necessary as a result of dearth of existing culturally contextualised strategies for teaching music, and the overreliance of Western pedagogies for music instruction in Ghanaian context, especially, at the basic level of education. The study was underpinned with the Sociocultural Learning Theory while using grounded theory as the design situated within the qualitative paradigm. Participants included six established ensembles, selected purposively to unearth dances attributable to unique instructional strategies and some inherent values. Leveraging on the dances, values of the songs as well as the embedded strategies for teaching such dances, the study established Ashdance pedagogy, a culturally responsive approach for incorporating Ashanti music styles into basic school musical instruction. It is recommended that teachers build culturally sensitive learning environments that celebrate diversity and encourage cultural preservation by integrating Ashdance pedagogical concepts into the music classroom teaching.

**Keywords:** Ashdance pedagogy, Alateawe, Dansuom, Ashanti, imitation

## 1. Introduction

Etymologically, Ashdance originates from the words, Ashanti and Dance. Ashanti is an ethnic group in Ghana that speaks the Akan language. They are endowed with lots of traditional dances that make their lives more beautiful. Among the Ashanti people, one cannot perform events that flow from the rites of passage beginning from birth and continuing through childhood, adulthood, and death, without traditional music performance. Ashdance pedagogy is, therefore, a culturally contextualized pedagogical strategy developed, as a music instructional pedagogy for Ghanaian basic schools.

It is worth stating that, many African music educators have acquainted and heavily relied on Western-developed pedagogies in teaching music over the years, and have not dared to explore such pedagogies that connect the thinking and practices of the African. In Ghana, only two scholars - Addo (1995) and Dzansi-Macpalm (2004) - dared to develop playground pedagogy within the African context, emphasizing the use of traditional game songs as techniques for teaching music. This thought of pedagogy has received global acclamation. Indeed, there is a need for expansion of such

developed pedagogies in Ghana and Africa as a whole to add to the paucity of such approaches for teaching music to the African or Ghanaian child. It is worth saying that, apart from the playground pedagogy, African music is frequently taught in schools worldwide using Western pedagogical approaches. In this manner, the essential aspect of the content to be taught is dissipated. Broadening our understanding and application of African pedagogies, while also integrating them with globally recognized methods, can facilitate more effective teaching and learning experiences. This approach benefits not only African music educators and students but also educators worldwide who incorporate African musical styles into their curriculum. Similarly, it is generally known that music education in Ghana has strived to gain some roots after independence. Flolu (2004) notes that while there are no written records pinpointing the exact commencement of formal music education in Ghana, historical evidence indicates that music instruction, particularly in singing, began to take shape in a manner reminiscent of European practices during the early 19th century. By 1974, an increasingly important place was offered to African music in the curriculum of schools. This development encompassed the

introduction of indigenous music which had been introduced into the classroom in many parts of the world to make post-colonial music education more meaningful to learners. As a sequel, there arose the necessity for music learning to include cultural content in order to make learners gain more understanding and appreciate music in context of their various cultures. As Squire et al. (2003) proposed, the content of a school curriculum should ideally reflect the culture of the individuals for whom it is designed. This establishes the fact that there was a need for school music education to integrate culture. As a matter of fact, the school instills in the child a way of life that the child will be expected to replicate as an adult in the interest of society (Brannon, 2008). Students in Ghana regard music as unappealing and meaningless, to some extent, for the reason that the entire music curriculum is based on Western music-appealing concepts and pedagogy (Dzansi-McPalm, 2004). Meanwhile, it is a trite knowledge that music has been a timeless element in our basic lives. It can reawaken human inactivity and has a significant impact on human life (Spychiger, 2001). By the same token, music has the ability to influence culture, which is a people's way of life. The upshot clearly indicates the need to expand such culturally contextualised pedagogies that have the propensity to address Ghanaian musical practices.

Nevertheless, the existing conventional music teaching and learning pedagogies, especially, as applicable to nurturing children, that have been globally accepted and used such as Dalcroze (developed in 1886), Suzuki (developed in the mid-20th Century), Carl Orff (developed in 1920s & 1930s), Kodaly (developed in the mid-20th Century) and Gordon's music learning theory (developed in 1979 & 1982) have existed for some time without an African contextual pedagogy that will be culturally significant to the African music educator as well as the child, apart from the earlier mentioned Ghanaian scholars' playground pedagogies. For this reason, looking at the Ashanti musical practices, there are inherent techniques that are adaptable for teaching, especially, the Ghanaian child. It is characterised by some strategies that can be theorised and made manifest to be locally used and globally adapted in line with the National Association of Music Education's (NAfME's) position statement on Early Childhood Music Education echoed by Cerniglian (2013):

Young children possess the inherent ability to engage in music learning. Therefore, each child deserves a musical childhood characterized by developmentally suitable musical interactions rooted in play, and responsive to individual differences such as gender, ability, and cultural background. A proficient early childhood music educator plays a crucial role in facilitating, supporting, and enriching these musical experiences. (p.70)

Although NAfME's position is a global perspective, most philosophical thoughts are embedded in cultural education that exposes learners to their environmental music while learning that of others. Kratus (2007) affirms the fact that, if the goal of music education is to preserve and transmit culture, then music teachers must connect the school music curriculum to the music that is played in a traditional setting.

Mooradian et al. (2007) are of the view that one of the most important responsibilities of schools is to transmit the shared cultural heritage of society from one generation to the next. All things considered, our motivation is to contribute immensely to how learners can be nurtured to learn music in a manner that situates within a cultural context so that they will grow to appreciate the music of their own and that of others. By extension, the developed pedagogy would be valuable for implementation across all levels of teaching music in Ghana, despite the primary focus being on music education at the basic level.

In light of shifts in the global economy and educational policies, music educators find themselves reconsidering traditional teaching methods to ensure they foster the development of 21st-century competencies among their students (Vasil et al., 2019). In response, educators are integrating instructional approaches that encourage critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and proficient use of technology and media. As a shred of compelling evidence, there has been an overreliance on Western musical pedagogies in Ghana, and presumably, the African continent exposing teachers to alienated methodologies. This article then briefly reviews the existing Western pedagogies and other related matters on Ghanaian traditional music including fieldwork to birth the Ashdance Pedagogy.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The development of the Ashdance Pedagogy was guided by the Sociocultural Learning Theory (as used in the works of Cunningham, 2023; Lantolf & Poehner, 2023; Lantolf & Xi, 2023), propounded by Vygotsky (1978). According to Vygotsky, individual consciousness is considered secondary and derivative. This perspective emphasizes that an individual's mental processes are not solely shaped by social interactions; rather, the specific cognitive structures and functions exhibited by individuals can be traced back to their interactions with others. In Vygotsky's writings, three key themes elucidate the nature of this interplay between individual and social processes in learning and development.

The first theme asserts that individual development has its roots in social interactions. Vygotsky's "genetic law of development" encapsulates this concept. Hence, according to this perspective, any aspect of a child's cultural development manifests itself in two dimensions: firstly, at the social level, involving interactions between individuals, and secondly, at the psychological level, internalized within the child's own mental processes. According to this perspective, as learners engage in collaborative activities and internalize the benefits of cooperation, they acquire new strategies and cultural knowledge, thereby shaping their cognitive development.

Usually, this principle has been illustrated through the examination of interactions among individuals possessing different levels of expertise or knowledge, such as the interactions between children and their caregivers, or between experts and novices. However, as Lantolf and Poehner (2023) point out, Vygotsky was interested not only in what more

knowledgeable others brought to the interaction but also in what the child brought to the interaction, as well as how the broader cultural and historical setting shaped the interaction. The second theme identified by Cunningham (2023) in Vygotsky's work highlights the role of tools and signs, known as semiotics, in mediating human activity at both the social and individual levels. This encompasses various forms of language, numerical systems, mnemonic techniques, artistic creations, writing systems, diagrams, maps, and mechanical drawings, among others. Additionally, modern tools such as computers, calculators, and paintbrushes also serve as semiotic means. These tools not only facilitate collaborative knowledge construction but also aid in the internalization of knowledge, enhancing future independent problem-solving abilities.

According to the fundamental concept of sociocultural theory, the human mind operates through mediation. In contrast to traditional views of the mind, Vygotsky proposed that similar to how humans use tools and labor to interact with the physical world and alter their circumstances, we also rely on symbolic tools, or signs, to regulate our relationships with others and ourselves, thereby transforming the nature of these interactions. Both physical and symbolic tools are cultural artifacts passed down through generations, with each succeeding generation able to modify them before passing them on. Symbolic tools encompass language, numbers, music, art, and other cultural constructs, which humans utilize to establish an indirect connection with the world.

Vygotsky envisioned the human mind as a functional system where the innate properties of the brain are organized into a culturally shaped mind through the integration of symbolic artifacts into cognition. Mental functions, including voluntary attention, intentional memory, planning, logical reasoning, problem-solving, learning, and evaluating the efficacy of these processes, are examples of this cultural shaping. Cultural artifacts, whether physical or symbolic, undergo modification as they are transmitted across generations, adapting to meet the evolving needs of communities and individuals. Vygotsky proposed that human development and learning are rooted in social and cultural interactions, whereby individuals' mental abilities are shaped by their social interactions and cultural environment. This underscores the significance of culture in learning, with language serving as the foundation of culture, and individuals acquiring knowledge and developing within the context of their community roles. In this regard, five musical types (dances) and the inherent songs of the Ashanti traditional music ensembles, including the text were used to develop the pedagogy.

### 3. Related Literature Review

#### 3.1 Global Music Pedagogies

As earlier indicated, there exist some pedagogies which have eaten into the music education fabrics in the Ghanaian classroom. American music education is and has been characterised by a wide range of approaches reflecting the

national character of America, indeed, some of which are a diverse blend of cultures, philosophies, academic practices, and approaches to music teaching and learning. Some of these prominent approaches that influence Ghanaian music education include the Carl Orff, Dalcroze, Kodály, and Suzuki methods.

#### 3.1.1 The Orff approach

The Carl Orff approach is another Western genesis instructional approach. Music education, according to the Carl Orff approach, should begin in the early stages of a child's life. It should be a natural part of children's developmental levels so that even if they participate in unsophisticated and undefined musical activities, they remain natural and capable of development. In the Orff method, the capacity for spontaneous music-making through improvisation is regarded as essential for fostering children's musical development. Thus, before further development, improvisation is essentially introduced into children's musical training at the level they can comprehend. "Orff's style is founded on the principle of simplification, the reduction or return of music to its essential elements, rhythm is reduced to its most basic terms. Consequently, percussion instruments hold a significant position in his approach, often necessitating the involvement of four or more percussionists in his compositions.

Orff saw the need to incorporate percussion instruments into children's music education in order to achieve the method's basic rhythmic development. A teacher's teaching/learning approach to each learner or group of learners on a given topic in a specific environment varies from one teacher to the next. Even within the same or different lessons, different approaches are used by the same teacher at different times. Based on specific social and cultural needs, some approaches are often unique ways of imparting musical knowledge to young and old alike. As a result, "music education, as a component of music, is a social and cultural need." It implies that, in the context of the Ghanaian primary school teacher, it is impractical for all teachers to adopt the same approach to teaching music and dance, even if there are some similarities in how they go about their classroom instructions. The learner's cultural environment is one major factor that accounts for pedagogical variations.

According to Kelly (2002), "Music education, as a component of music, is also a cultural phenomenon affected by cultural constructs, values, and functions." As a result, music, according to EYC (1972), has been linked in some form with culture since the beginning of human history. These cultural implications in music education imply that music education - content, methodology, and facilities - must be viewed as dynamic as culture itself. However, most music education literature focuses on content and, to a lesser extent, facilities, with little or no attention paid to pedagogy. Scholars such as Nketia (1986) as well as Mensah and Acquah (2021) provide a guide to help African music teachers approach music lessons the African way. Music educators working in formal institutions in modern societies have responded to the need for specialised approaches and processes aimed at finding more creative ways to implement music education by drawing on

the research findings of other music educators. In this regard, a broad view of music education methods would allow for a clearer perception and appreciation of each method's prospects, even in a relocated context.

Acquah et al. (2020) outlined the Orff Schulwerk, also known as the Orff Approach, as a developmental method employed in music education. This approach integrates music, movement, drama, and speech into lessons that mirror a child's playful world. Lessons are structured to engage children at their level of understanding, incorporating elements of play while emphasizing the integration of arts with storytelling, poetry, movement, and drama. The Schulwerk method employs elements from the child's native language, incorporating sounds, timbres, rhythms, melodies, and tonal materials, primarily sourced from folk music repertoire. Similar to other pedagogical approaches, Orff Schulwerk advocates for experiential learning, whereby children engage in music-making activities before delving into analysis or intellectualization. It encourages hands-on musical exploration, regardless of the child's skill level. However, it is noted that much of the content within Orff Schulwerk is centered around Western music characteristics, which may not fully allow for the incorporation of local content and styles into children's musical experiences.

### 3.1.2 The Dalcroze Approach

Many music educators' philosophies embrace the concept of music for all people. Émile-Henri Jaques-Dalcroze is one of these music educators. Émile-Henri Jaques-Dalcroze is credited with developing the Dalcroze approach to music teaching and learning, a method inspired by the diverse educational landscape of America. The American educational system embraces a rich tapestry of cultures, philosophies, and academic practices, with a fundamental belief in providing every child with a free and appropriate education, including access to music education. This philosophy extends to music education, emphasizing that music should be accessible to all children, not just those deemed gifted or talented.

Central to this approach is the belief that hands-on experience in music is crucial for developing musical understanding. Thus, the Jaques-Dalcroze method prioritizes activities such as singing, playing instruments, dancing, acting, and creative expression as integral components of childhood education within the Dalcroze environment.

Dalcroze Education is distinguished by its playful and experiential approach to music instruction, prioritizing a process that awakens, develops, and refines innate musicality. Central to this approach is rhythmic movement, often known as eurhythmics, which is complemented by ear training and improvisation techniques. The Dalcroze method posits that students who engage with music through physical movement develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of rhythm, harmony, and melody. Therefore, bodily movements are utilized to embody musical rhythms, fostering a kinesthetic understanding of musical concepts.

The multi-dimensional approach to music learning offered by the Dalcroze method is especially suitable for young learners,

as it engages them in active, hands-on experiences that tap into their natural inclination towards movement and play. This differs from Kodaly's emphasis on solfege by always incorporating movement. For instance, Stone Passing games can be employed in the Dalcroze approach, integrating movement with musical learning.



**Fig 1: Children playing passing stone games**

Another integral aspect of the Dalcroze approach is improvisation, which enables students to hone their ability to spontaneously react and physically respond to music. Central to the Dalcroze philosophy is the belief that individuals learn most effectively when engaging multiple senses simultaneously. Dalcroze advocated for a holistic approach to music instruction, which includes tactile, kinesthetic, aural, and visual experiences. In this approach, music is not merely heard but also experienced through speech, gesture, and movement. By synthesizing the mind, body, and emotions in the learning process, this approach emphasizes that comprehensive engagement leads to a deeper understanding and mastery of musical concepts. This perspective aligns with Plato's ancient philosophy, which asserts that education consists of two branches: gymnastics, focusing on the body, and music, dedicated to nurturing the soul (Pennington et al., 2014). Dalcroze's approach encompasses three main methods: Eurhythmics, Solfege, and Improvisation, serving as the cornerstone of his principles of music instruction that remain relevant today. According to Jaques-Dalcroze, the ultimate aim for every musician is to cultivate sensitivity and expressiveness, conveying music through movement, sound, thought, emotion, and creative expression.

The Dalcroze approach is extremely relevant in Ghanaian primary school music and dance activities because the students, like those in other cultures, live in a world of play and musical games. Combining such an approach with the tenets of Ashanti dances can improve music teaching and learning at all levels of music education.

### 3.1.3 The Kodaly Approach

In addition to the Orff and Dalcroze approaches, there is the Kodaly approach. According to Sheridan (2019), in the early twentieth century, Hungarian composer and educator Zoltán Kodály developed the interactive, collaborative, and highly kinesthetic Kodály method of music learning. It combines several effective techniques for honing the fundamentals of musicianship. The Kodály approach is very closely related to the world of musical ear training because it focuses on the expressive and creative skills of musicianship rather than theory or instrument skills. It could be viewed as an approach

to ear training, as it is primarily your musical ear that Kodály develops using the Solfege Hand Signs, as explained in the following paragraphs (Lehmann et al., 2007). The Kodály method is a pedagogical approach focused on nurturing musical skills and concepts from a young age. This method incorporates various tools and techniques such as folk songs, Curwen hand signs, pictures, movable-do, rhythm symbols, and syllables. Kodály training is designed to provide a comprehensive music education that aligns with National Teaching Standards pedagogies. Students engage in a systematic development of all skill areas, beginning with simple tasks early in their musical education journey.

Kodály's philosophy emphasizes that music education is most effective when initiated at an early age, and that all individuals are capable of achieving musical literacy by engaging with folk and composed music of significant artistic merit. The Kodály method follows a structured sequence, with each lesson building upon the foundations laid in previous sessions. Singing is given paramount importance as it forms the basis for developing musicianship.

Hand signs are utilized to help children visualize the spatial relationships between notes, aiding in their understanding of pitch. When combined with solfege singing (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do), hand signs facilitate accurate pitch production. Through these integrated lessons, students naturally progress towards mastery in sight-reading and ear training. Additionally, the Kodály method emphasizes the use of familiar folk songs and repertoire already known to children, fostering a deeper connection and engagement with the material.

The Kodály method utilizes movable-do solfege and introduces an important tool called solfege hand signs. These signs, also known as Kodály hand signs or Curwen hand signs, were created by John Curwen and became popular through their incorporation into the Kodály method. Each tone of the seven-note solfege system is assigned a unique hand shape, allowing singers to use hand gestures while singing. Importantly, all hand signs can be performed with just one hand, which is especially helpful for singers unfamiliar with the solfege system. From the discussion, the concept is purely Western as children will have to learn pitches through solfege. Application of Ghanaian songs in this regard may not necessarily need the solfege for pupils to learn their Ghanaian songs and identify pitches. It may not be applicable within the context of learning Ghanaian traditional songs. It can only be applied when teaching Western songs to African children. This is certainly a gap to be filled by the Ashdance pedagogy.

### 3.1.4 The Suzuki Approach

The Suzuki method is the final method to discuss. Shinichi Suzuki's life-long work resulted in the approach, also known as the mother-tongue approach (1898–1998), a Japanese violin teacher who specialised in teaching. His method focuses on holistically developing students to become accomplished musicians as well as admirable human beings. Tanaka and Knapp (2002) stated about the Suzuki method, "Talent education is not simply education for the 'gifted

child." It is a love-based teaching method that aims to save millions of children all over the world who are thought to have been born with low intelligence and subsequently labeled as dropouts, their unlimited inborn potential crushed to nothing. As stated by Kendall (1996), the Suzuki method is essentially the mother-tongue method with no dropouts.

According to Acquah et al. (2020), children learn to speak by listening and imitating the spoken language they hear around them. In Suzuki teaching, considerable emphasis is placed on daily listening to recordings of the Suzuki repertoire, as well as to music in general. Students are encouraged to listen to recordings frequently, as it aids in their learning process. The approach to teaching music in Suzuki method parallels the immersion method used in language learning. Children are immersed in music, first learning to listen to a piece extensively before attempting to reproduce it themselves. The Suzuki method, also known as the mother-tongue approach, aims to teach children how to play music with the same natural ease that they learn their native language.

Dr. Suzuki believes that music education should begin as early as possible, with systematic instruction starting around age three, and formal instrument lessons commencing between six and nine years old. This method seeks to create a learning environment for music that mirrors the natural learning process of acquiring one's native language.

He applied the fundamental principles of language acquisition to music education, dubbing his approach the "mother-tongue approach." Similar to language learning, music is absorbed by the child through processes such as listening, repetition, memorization, and vocabulary building. Through these methods, music becomes an integral part of the child's development. Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the child's success in this method, akin to the support and encouragement parents provide in language acquisition. Parents often learn the instrument alongside the child, serving as musical role models and fostering a positive learning environment conducive to the child's progress.

While originally designed for the violin, the Suzuki method has since been adapted for various instruments, including the piano, flute, guitar, and traditional drums and instruments.

It must be stated that the approach best suits foreign instruments most of which have definite pitches. In Ghana, most of our traditional instruments are either percussive or membranophones with few chordophones and aerophones. As much as our children may learn other foreign instruments, it is important to think about our own, nurturing our children through cultural education.

### 3.2 Pedagogical Approaches and Values Embedded in African Music and Dance

To begin the discussion on values in indigenous music and dances in Ghana, Adjepong (2020) has indicated that, in Ghanaian primary schools, music is a compulsory subject taught by generalist teachers, yet there is a lack of information regarding the strategies these teachers employ to implement the music curriculum. In schools, music activities primarily

consist of singing, movement, and improvised instrument playing, which only cover a portion of the planned music curriculum outlined in the Creative Arts syllabus. The prevalence of unplanned music activities during lessons is attributed to teachers' perceived lack of adequate training in music education.

Several deficiencies contribute to the challenges faced in teaching music. These include the underutilization of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching, insufficient teaching and learning materials, inadequate physical teaching conditions, lack of motivation and support for music instruction, and time constraints due to the emphasis on meeting targets in core subjects.

Teachers employ various strategies to overcome these challenges. Collaboration with colleagues in planning, teaching, and integrating music into classroom activities is one approach. Additionally, teachers draw on students' expertise in teaching and learning, involving them in the music education process to enhance engagement and participation.

This is a clear indication that there are existing problems in the school system as much as the teaching and learning of music and dance is concerned.

Again, Adjepong (2020) commented on the collaborative aspect of learning music and dance:

the teaching of music in primary school is about pupils learning music and not teachers performing for them (pupils). Again, music education is for both teachers and pupils and, therefore, "the teaching skills that teachers use to facilitate children's learning in mathematics, English, and so on can be applied to music too. (p.4)

It is, therefore, significant for lower primary school teachers to focus on what they can do by considering the teaching of music as the teaching of any other curriculum subject through the application of their general knowledge and skills of principles of teaching. This held belief requires teachers who can deploy developmentally appropriate musical materials and also employ varieties of teaching techniques and strategies (Adjepong, 2021, citing Music Educators National Conference) to enhance pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding of music.

Obidike and Enemu (2013) delve into developmentally appropriate strategies, focusing on the concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) pioneered and endorsed by the North American National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). DAP encompasses teaching approaches that consider children's age, interests, abilities, and experiences to support their attainment of challenging yet achievable objectives. Within the DAP framework, educators must comprehend the individual differences among students, enabling them to devise tailored teaching strategies that foster their development (Zhang et al., 2021). Research suggests that implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in classroom settings, characterized by a supportive environment and social

interaction, can positively impact students' development and academic performance (Huffman & Peer, 2000). DAP is a widely embraced educational approach, particularly in the United States of America. Studies examining teachers' beliefs about DAP have also been conducted in other countries, including Taiwan (Obidike & Enemu, 2013) and South Korea (Kwon, 2004).

To explain further, Adjepong (2020) suggests that music education should "provide children with opportunities to listen to music, to learn to understand its elements, to reproduce these elements through singing and playing instruments, and to relate bodily movement to musical expression" (p. 472). To sum up, children must be given equal opportunities to improvise in musically based lessons in order to enable them to refine their natural abilities while also keeping them active.

### 3.3 Music Pedagogies: Ghanaian Context

Ghanaian culture includes indigenous cultures as well as colonial-era cultures. It is also influenced by cultures that have emerged as a result of current global interactions. With independence, most former colonial states faced the problem of decolonisation, a process that gave birth to a new type of dependency known as neocolonialism (Addo, 1995). According to Addo (1995), children and teachers were supposed to have a say in curriculum planning and implementation, in line with the policy guidelines in basic education in the Education Reform Programme. Despite curriculum reformers' good intentions, the reality was that a top-down process existed. Top-down curricular integration results in subject matter programming with aims, objectives, assessment, and sequential curriculum development patterns. However, curricula developed in this manner caused some issues in Ghana. Teachers were left to fend for themselves because curriculum developers in Ghana have no direct control over how schools are run (Addo, 1995). Furthermore, teachers were not provided with adequate in-service training to teach the new programme. The problem was exacerbated by lack of facilities and supplies such as books, equipment, classrooms, and teachers.

From the years of Cultural Studies, through Music and Dance to Creative Arts, the performance and practice of singing are key to social reality in many communities. The implementation of a culturally relevant curriculum has pedagogical implications. This is why it is important to address issues of such pedagogies for children's musical cultures in Ghana. Some of the Ashanti songs are played and practiced when school is not in session, as well as during break time and playgrounds, and anywhere else that is deemed appropriate. The Ashanti musical types reflect cultural traditions and serve as an avenue for children to learn and share cultural knowledge, even if they are oblivious to it. Singing, movement patterns, and drumming as social processes with cultural implications as found in several studies (Addo, 1995; Brown, 2022; Fiveash et al., 2023; Kirschner et al., 2014; Kragness et al., 2022; Stiller, 2023)

### 4. Methodology

This study employed grounded theory. Grounded theory first appeared in the 1960s as a result of Glaser and Strauss' sociological research programme on dying in hospitals (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). They developed a method that allowed the researcher to generate a substantive theory based on empirical data in a systematic manner. Developing a pedagogical concept in Ashanti dances situates within the frame of grounded theory research design. Approaches to teaching the dances in the community coupled with its nuances were focused to theorise a music teaching pedagogy that is culturally contextualized. Six musical ensembles in Ashanti - Amameseso Agofomma, Manhyia Tete Nnwonkoro Kuo, Nana Bayie, Addae Cutlass, Gye Nyame, and Yaw Dwene were sampled purposively, using their leaders and the regular members as participants to collect the data for the novelty. Rai and Thapa (2015) are of the view that purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that are needed for the study. The selected groups and their members had wealth of songs which had instructional strategies, and which could give the inherent pedagogical stances in their dances. Interview was employed as principal instrument while listening and observation were used as ancillary methods in the collection of the needed data for the research. Dances and the respective songs by the groups were collected and recorded while the approaches and strategies used in teaching and learning the dances were also documented. Inductive thematic analysis was done to determine the themes inferred from the data collected. The texts collected were also categorised into themes as well taking into consideration the recurring issues. Consequently, the values inherent in the songs were also analysed and included in developing the pedagogy. Dances collected were *Sanga*, *Akosua tumtum*, *Dansuomu*, *Alateawe*, and *bosoee*. Strategies embedded in the teaching of the dances were Imitation, Call-an-response, Repetition, Improvisation while the values inherent in the songs were Interpersonal interaction, Language development, Supportive learning, and Creative skills.

### 5. The Ashdance Pedagogy

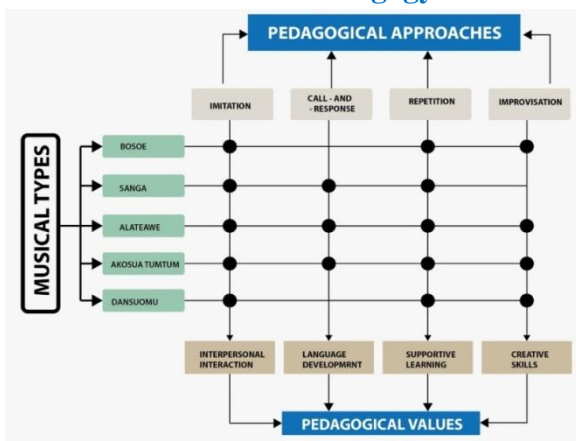


Fig. 2: Ashdance Pedagogy by Arko-Mensah and Agyeiwaah (2023)

Table 1: Key to Ashdance Pedagogy

Musical Type ( MT)	Name of Musical Type
MT <sub>1</sub>	Bosoee
MT <sub>2</sub>	Sanga
MT <sub>3</sub>	Alateawe
MT <sub>4</sub>	Akosua Tumtum
MT <sub>5</sub>	Dansuomu

Table 2: Pedagogical Approaches

Pedagogical Approach (PA)	Types of Pedagogical Approaches
PA <sub>1</sub>	Imitation
PA <sub>2</sub>	Call-and-Response
PA <sub>3</sub>	Repetition
PA <sub>4</sub>	Improvisation

The Ashdance pedagogy above takes care of and recognises the development of motor skills, performance skills, creativity, interpersonal interaction, language skill development, and social construction as values embedded in the Ashanti dance types. While the pedagogical methods included in each of the six musical types are written horizontally, the titles of each of the dances are written vertically. All musical types were correspondingly connected vertically and horizontally to the teaching methods. The black dots identify and link or intersect the dances to their appropriate teaching approaches. Using the Ashdance pedagogy diagram as a guide, musical types (MT) and pedagogical approaches (PA) are used to set goals and provide better indications. For instance, MT<sub>1</sub>,PA<sub>1</sub> will refer to bosoee and Imitation, respectively, following the black dot. For instance, MT<sub>3</sub>, PA<sub>1</sub> will not link or intersect because the dance style and the pedagogical approaches do not align.

### 6. Conclusion

The Ashdance pedagogy is built on the musical traditions of the Ashanti people. Leveraging on Bosoee, Sanga, Alateawe, Akosua Tumtum, and Dansuom musical types, the Ashdance method makes use of improvisation, call-and-response, imitation, and repetition to support students' full and varied development. It does this by drawing on the musical heritage of the Ashanti people. By recognizing and embracing the inherent benefits of Ashanti musical forms, including the development of physical skills, performance ability, creativity, interpersonal relationships, language skills, and social construction. This method fosters peer collaboration and gives children a sense of belonging. Performers are given the freedom and opportunity to take risks through repetition and imitation, which also helps them overcome their concerns of failing and rejection. The call-and-response style of Ashanti music and dance, for instance, encourages performers to actively respond to signals and recommendations, boosting their ability to quickly adapt and respond. The inclusion of Ashanti music and dance in educational settings can offer a

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distinctive and culturally rich approach to learning, supporting the development of upcoming generations. It is highly recommended to use these pedagogical techniques in educational activities inside schools given the tremendous advantages. Overall, the pedagogy creates an educational experience that is culturally rich and transformative, rather than overreliance of Western pedagogies for music instruction in Ghanaian context.

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