

Running Head: MOTIVATION OF ORFF SCHULWERK TRAINING

Motivation Factors of Music Educators

Attending an Orff Schulwerk Summer Training Workshop

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the motivating factors that influenced music teachers to attend a two-week summer Orff Schulwerk training workshop. Participants were 47 general, choral, and instrumental music educators enrolled in a 2001 Orff summer training institute. General questions included: (a) How/when were participants first introduced to Orff Schulwerk?, (b) How were participants funding this workshop?, and (c) What were the motivating factors for participants to attend this workshop? Half of the participants (23) received no introduction to the Orff Schulwerk approach, while the remaining half were introduced during their undergraduate general music-methods course. Self-funding was the primary source of funding for the workshop. Educators were primarily seeking new ideas and a wider range of music activities. Benefits of professional development are also discussed.

Motivating Factors of Music Educators

Attending an Orff Schulwerk Summer Training Workshop

Across our nation and around the world, children are actively involved in their musical learning. Students are singing, moving, performing rhythmic activities and drama, and playing recorder, pitched, and nonpitched percussion instruments through the Orff Schulwerk approach to music education. These students learn by doing, which make them actively involved in their music classroom.

Founder Carl Orff (1895-1982) began this integrated teaching method in 1923 when he met Dorothee Gunther, who envisioned the founding of a school for music, movement, and dance. In 1924, Orff and Gunther opened the *Guntherschule* (schooling in music) in Munich, Germany. The 1930s saw the first publications, lectures, demonstrations, and training courses at the *Guntherschule*. Due to political tensions, the school was closed in 1944 and destroyed by bombs during World War II.

Orff was contacted after the war by the Bavarian Broadcasting Company to recreate some of the performances from the *Guntherschule*. Orff asked his colleague Gunild Keetman (a dance student at the school in 1926) to assist him with the project, and in 1948 the first program was aired. Recordings of these broadcasts were requested by teachers to use as instructional guides in their classrooms. Five volumes of materials were published between 1950 and 1954. These materials would serve as models for teachers and students.

The Orff approach is often introduced in the general-music method's course during undergraduate music-teacher-education programs. Beyond this, there are introductory workshops and certification levels that one can obtain. Levels I, II, and III are two-week workshops intended to develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding of materials, as well as

the procedures, necessary to apply this approach in the music classroom. These introductory and certification courses are offered at various locations around the world and can usually be taken for graduate- college credit.

Music teachers should be prepared for every grade level and specialty area (general, choral, instrumental) that they might be expected to teach. The training that music educators receive is no more lengthy or extensive than that of other teachers, yet all too often they are certified to teach grades K - 12 with a broad, limited course of preparation (Haack & Smith, 2000). According to Baldwin (1980), college methods classes have not adequately trained student teachers to develop lesson plans and goals. DeLorenzo (1990) states that too much emphasis is placed on methods courses. Students are often placed in teaching situations in which they find themselves lacking in experience to relate to students and their behaviors.

Liberal arts courses and state education-department imperatives are piled on top of already crowded music core curricula, making it virtually impossible for students to know everything before they begin their teaching careers. Yet despite heavy degree requirements, teacher-training programs have undergone numerous reforms as a response to heavy criticism for producing poorly trained teachers. Such reforms have included more courses in arts, sciences and technology, longer internships, established and revised tests, and an insistence that new teacher-education professors have elementary or secondary teaching experience (Hipple, 1999). Patricia A. Wasley, graduate dean at New York City's Bank Street College of Education, states, "Most teacher-training programs lack sufficient time for students to gain in-depth knowledge of academic subjects and learn how to teach different types of children. But if we said to teacher educators that their job is to get students ready for the first two years of teaching, and that teachers' responsibility is to continue to learn throughout their lifetime, then we could seriously

tailor teacher-preparation curricula to focus much more on the practical realities of working with kids” (Basinger, 2000, p. A19).

At some point during every student’s teacher training and internship the importance of lifelong learning is discussed. One way that teachers learn to enhance their work is through professional development, which helps one to grow and learn as a musician and teacher (*Teaching Music*, 1994). Professional development can involve taking college courses or attending workshops and conferences that offer credit or special certification. These workshop and courses offer ways to apply the knowledge acquired during undergraduate education and learn the newest developments in the music education field (Robinson, 1991). Many people are also led back to classrooms and workshops because attending them results in faster salary increases (Smith & Haack, 2000).

Professional development is one way for teachers to recharge themselves and their teaching. Rogers (1986) advises music educators to take a music course and attend professional conventions as a way to avoid job stress and burnout. Enjoying the company of colleagues and discovering new teaching methods, materials, and equipment should benefit students and teachers. “None of us would trust our health to a physician who did not keep up with advances in medical science and the latest in medications and equipment; our students also deserve the best available music and teaching techniques” (Rogers, 1986, p. 26). Payne & Yukimura (1995) concur that attending conferences and taking courses are an excellent source of new materials that will reinvigorate teaching.

Respondents to a survey by Scott-Kassner & Kassner (2001) also identified graduate study and special courses in Jaques-Dalcroze eurhythmics, Kodaly, and Orff Schulwerk as highly beneficial in nurturing their musicianship. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors

that influenced music teachers to attend a two-week summer Orff-training workshop.

Participants were 47 general, choral, and instrumental music educators enrolled in a 2001 Orff summer training institute. General inquiries included: (a) How/when were participants first introduced to Orff Schulwerk; (b) How were participants funding this workshop; and (c) What were the motivating factors for participants to attend this workshop.

Procedure

Subjects completed a questionnaire while they were waiting in the registration line during the first morning of the workshop. Surveys were handed to and collected from each participant by the researchers. The survey contained checklists and one free-response section. The questionnaires were then analyzed according to the responses given, and all responses remained anonymous. Forty-nine teachers were registered for the workshop and 49 surveys were collected. Of these, two were incomplete, leaving a total of 47 surveys for analysis.

Results

Analysis of the surveys by the authors revealed that educators came to the workshop looking for new ideas for teaching music concepts and developing a wider range of music activities. The responses to each survey question are given below.

1. Gender

2. Level enrolled

Eleven males and 36 females comprised this summer workshop. Twenty-six participants were enrolled in Level I courses, nine in Level II, and twelve in Level III.

3. Number of years teaching music in a school setting

4. Highest music-related degree earned

5. Certification held

Table 1

Number of years teaching music in a school setting

Years of teaching experience (N=47)	Number of participants
0-5 years	24
6-10 years	10
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	4
21-25 years	4
26+ years	1

Twenty-four participants had zero to five years of teaching experience, 10 participants had six to ten years, four participants each had 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20 years, and 21 to 25 years, and one had over 26 years (see Table 1).

Table 2

Highest music-related degree earned

Degree type (N=47)	Number of participants
Bachelors	28
Masters	14
Doctorate	2
Certificate	1

The majority of respondents (28) had received a bachelor's degree as the highest music-related degree earned. A master's degree (14), a doctorate (2), and certificate (1) were the next three most common. Two subjects gave no response to this question (see Table 2). More participants (19) held a K-12 vocal/general music certification than any other type. Vocal/instrumental (K-12) ranked second with 17 teachers, and six participants were categorized in both the "not certified" and the "other" categories. Four teachers had a K-12 instrumental certificate. Participants may have held more than one area of certification and checked all areas that applied.

6. What grade levels are you currently teaching?

7. Teaching areas

8. Additional certification(s) held

Forty-five participants attending this workshop were elementary teachers. Participants may have taught more than one grade level and checked all areas that applied. Preschool teachers numbered six, junior/middle school teachers were four, senior-high teachers were two and college/university teachers were four. Forty-two teachers taught in the general music area; choral music was second with 26 teachers; instrumental were eight teachers. Three participants held Kodaly certification. One participant each held a certificate in Dalcroze, Suzuki, and Weikart.

9. Were you introduced to the Orff Schulwerk teaching approach in any undergraduate course?

10. If yes, which undergraduate course exposed the Orff approach?

Twenty-four participants indicated that they had been introduced to the Orff Schulwerk approach, whereas 23 participants had received no introduction to this approach. Of those who

had been introduced to this approach, the “music methods” course was where the majority (16) received their introduction. Nine respondents were introduced to Orff in the “Introduction to Music Education” course. Five participants were exposed to Orff during their field experience.

11. Who is funding this workshop for you?

12. Would you have attended this workshop had you not received any financial assistance?

Thirty-seven participants were self-funded for this workshop. Eight were compensated by their school districts and seven received grants or scholarships. Two subjects reported other methods of payment. Thirty-two teachers stated that they would have attended regardless of financial assistance. Ten people said that they would not attend without financial assistance. Some subjects indicated more than one form of financial assistance.

13. How important were the following factors in your decision to attend this workshop?

When asked for their top reasons for attending this workshop, most responded that it was their desire to develop new ideas for teaching music concepts and a wider variety of musical activities to include in the classroom (see Table 3).

Table 3

Factors influencing decision to attend this workshop

Factor (N=47)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important
(a) Develop new ideas for teaching concepts	0	1 (2%)	46 (98%)
(b) Develop a wider range of music activities	0	3 (6%)	44 (94%)

(c) Exposure to the Orff approach	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	43 (92%)
(d) Improve personal music skills	1 (2%)	9 (19%)	37 (79%)
(e) Develop sequential learning strategies	1 (2%)	11 (23%)	35 (75%)
(f) Reputation of instructor(s) *	4 (9%)	12 (26%)	29 (62%)
(g) Develop strategies to assess student achievement *	5 (11%)	14 (30%)	27 (58%)
(h) Earn coursework hours for recertification, salary increase, or academic degree	10 (21%)	10 (21%)	27 (58%)
(i) Location of workshop *	10 (21%)	14 (30%)	20 (43%)
(j) Recommendation from another person *	15 (32%)	15 (32%)	14 (30%)
(k) Cost of the workshop *	12 (26%)	22 (47%)	11 (23%)
(l) Financial assistance *	26 (55%)	7 (15%)	9 (19%)
(m) Reputation of university *	12 (26%)	26 (55%)	7 (15%)

*Indicates all subjects did not respond to this question.

Discussion

The primary mode of Orff teacher training in the United States occurs through summer courses offered at colleges and universities. This training is usually two or three weeks in length. In addition, the American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) has approximately 70 chapters that offer workshops throughout the year that provide a good introduction to the Orff method (Shamrock, 1997). Through these experiences, teachers continue to nurture their own personal and musical growth.

The primary participants in this workshop were female, elementary teachers with zero to five years of teaching experience who held a bachelor's degree in K-12 vocal/general certification. These data partially concur with a survey conducted by the alliance of the active music-making approaches represented by AOSA, the Organization of American-Kodaly Educators (OAKE), the Dalcroze Society of America, and the Gordon Institute for Music Learning. Two hundred thirty-seven respondents from 43 states responded to their survey with the following results: (a) 80.17% were classroom general music teachers, and (b) 86.5% taught in an elementary school. Sixty-one percent of these subjects held master's degrees, unlike those subjects in the present study (Brophy, 2001).

Level I was the course with the highest number (26) of participants enrolled. The number of participants decreased by nearly one-third from Level I to Level II (9), and by half from Level I to Level III (12). This drop-off rate is a concern of Judith Cole, AOSA president. She states that only 16 to 17 percent of Level I classmates continue through Level III. She encourages AOSA to find ways to encourage people to continue their learning. Perhaps a source of funds would motivate others to continue beyond Levels I and II. Cole also suggests that staying in contact with Level I students through lesson-plan exchanges would help raise their confidence and provide support, which might encourage them to continue their Orff training (Huffman, 2000).

Methods courses provided the primary means of introducing the Orff approach to music education for these students and for the respondents for the alliance survey. Ahlstedt (2000) states that active music-making approaches incorporated into the ideal undergraduate music education curriculum will help meet the National Standards in Music Education. Another suggestion made by Ahlstedt (2000) is that a current teacher with Orff, Kodaly, or Dalcroze

certification should teach the methods courses. If undergraduates could specialize by their junior years in college (in instrumental, vocal, or elementary music), then students could focus on Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, or Gordon courses specifically for their future teaching career. Colleges and universities have reexamined their curricula so that coursework reflects the demands of the profession. Asmus (2000) adds that “music education representatives must then determine which courses need to be included and what needs to be included in each of those courses” (p. 31).

Thirty-seven participants for this summer workshop stated that they were responsible for financing this course. Even without financial assistance, 32 of the 49 people said that they would have attended anyway. School districts often do not offer adequate professional development funds for teachers. The National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (1997) found that school districts in the United States spend less than one percent of their resources on staff development, as compared to 8 to 10 percent in most corporations and foreign schools.

Funding for courses and workshops is an issue for AOSA leaders to address. Offering free workshops to university students as well as grants and scholarships to attend national conventions would be an opportunity for students to be involved in Orff Schulwerk (Huffman, 2001).

Educators participating in this summer workshop were primarily seeking new ideas for teaching music concepts and developing a wider range of music activities. Few professions offer the opportunity for extensive summer study, but yet, this is often one of the few opportunities beyond college for educators to focus for a week or two on a topic that is of special interest to them. These workshops require a major commitment of time and money, but spending time with master teachers can change one’s perspective, producing significant results.

The students are the ultimate benefactors of educators' advanced study. Ann Kay (2000), past president of the Organization of American Kodaly Educators, advocates for "retraining practicing elementary music teachers in sequenced, skill-based instruction based on the Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze, and Gordon approaches" (p.52). Summer workshops may be where this training takes place.

Professional development is imperative to the teaching professions. If we do not attend to our personal growth, we stagnate in our jobs. Making time for our own intellectual growth and ourselves will make us better teachers and make our students excited about studying music.

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