



2022 Woodside, Confidence & Clarity in Elemental Movement

Effective teachers of Orff-Schulwerk use clear modeling and intentional process to isolate and manipulate musical concepts, but many lack the confidence to approach the movement elements in the same way. Experience the comfort and joy of a well-structured elemental movement unit, then workshop your own ideas and bring an original movement unit back to your students.

Mirroring

- Imitate teacher's symmetrical shapes.
- Mirror asymmetrical shapes when the section changes.

What movement element changed at each new musical section?

Symmetrical and asymmetrical body designs

Define symmetry and identify the body's midline as the line of symmetry.

What other movement elements were in use?

Body, Action, Space, Time and Energy

Perform Choreography

- Learn a short excerpt of Alvin Ailey Dance Company's, "Ounce of Faith" by Darrell Grand Moultrie performed to the song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" that features both symmetrical and asymmetrical body designs.
- Watch a video of the entire solo performance.

What types of body designs are used more frequently in this excerpt: symmetrical or asymmetrical?

Why might this be?

Sculptor and Clay

- Explore symmetrical and asymmetrical body designs in partnerships where one is the "sculptor" and one is the "clay."
- "Sculptor" silently move "clay's" body into symmetrical, then asymmetrical body designs using gentle, appropriate touch.
- Gently press downward or lift upward from shoulders to communicate a level change.

Which body designs felt the most interesting to you as the "clay?"

Moving Statues

- Identify symmetry and asymmetry in photographs of nature - orchids, sprouts, buds, fiddlehead ferns, etc.
- Explore creating body designs at different levels in space with the nature photographs as an impulse.
- Improvise to music with mostly symmetrical body designs during the verse, asymmetrical shapes during the refrain while improvising to music.

Which type of body designs did you prefer to make while moving: symmetrical or asymmetrical? Why? Which type of body design made traveling easier?

Flocking (Shadowing with Traveling)

- Form a diamond formation in groups of 4 or 5.
- Shadow the person at the front of the diamond following behind in formation if the leader travels.
- When leading, take care to make smooth transitions between body designs, keep movements simple for clarity and stability, maintain forward focus, and avoid making gestures in front of body where they cannot be seen.
- When the leader changes their facing clearly to another direction, the group follows a new leader: the person who is now in the front.

How did it feel to lead without watching your peers following you?

Improvisation in performances is the ultimate in student-centered performing, takes less class time to refine, and can be quite beautiful to watch.

Compose

- Individually recall one movement of each type from the previous activities and prepare to contribute an elemental phrase to a composition with a group.
- In groups, watch each person's phrase, then learn each phrase.
- Create a collaborative composition by arranging and modifying the phrases to fit them together.
 - Consider spatial relationships: How can bodies create symmetry when working together?
 - Use elements of time (strong start/end, before/after, tempo variation, repetition and surprise!) and space (level, near/far, direction and pathway of travel, facing, size) to add interest to your group's composition.
- Share with the class in big rondo form using the excerpt from "Ounce of Faith" as the A Section.
- Offer specific constructive feedback after the performance.

Analyze Unit

- Identify each part of the Orff-Schulwerk approach that is addressed through activities above.
- Brainstorm additional movement activities that could be used in each part of a learning process.

Create Your Own Unit

Our body design activity used **symmetrical body design** as its focus. In a small group, select **one movement element** from the Elements of Dance chart and brainstorm ideas for a lesson/unit to address that specific concept. Try to use a variety of activities applying some or all stages of the approach.

Not all units of study employ all of the above phases of the Orff approach. This session modeled one possible process, while also acknowledging that there are many ways to foster understanding, build skills and inspire creativity in movement.

*Clarity comes from preparing a unit around **one specific movement element**.*

Confidence comes from practicing each activity before leading students through it.

Nature photography was my inspiration. What will inspire you and your students?