

A Comparison of the Orff-Schulwerk and Text-based Learning Approaches
in Teaching Elementary Music

Principal Investigator:

Valerie A. Austin
PKY DRS
1080 SW 11th Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

Laboratory School:

PK Yonge Developmental Research
School
University of Florida
1080 SW 11th Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

Resource Advisor:

Dr. Timothy Brophy
College of Music
PO Box 17900
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32601

The proposed grant will fund training, assessment tools and some musical instruments for a research study involving two different approaches to music instruction. The central focus of the study will be two classes of third grade music students, who will receive fundamentally different approaches to music education. One class will receive general music instruction based on an educational book series, *Share the Music*. This class will be taught using the songs and materials provided in the text as their basic framework for learning music. The second class will be immersed in the Orff-Schulwerk method, which is musically centered around instrument playing and movement. Accepted music assessment tools will be used to assess the musical development of the children both before and after the study. Conclusions will be drawn regarding both approaches to music teaching, including student progress, and music methodology, and the efficacy of each strategy in meeting State and National standards.

2.a. The question is simply stated: Given two different methodologies of music instruction, is there one which best develops fundamental music skills for elementary students? The study will compare student learning through two different methods of teaching. There are strong proponents of each style. A serious attempt will be made to evaluate student musical growth and standard achievement via each method, and a determination will be made regarding student success of each method.

- b. A review of current literature reveals there have been no studies that directly compare the relative merits of one methodology as compared to the other. Almost all studies of music instruction involve strategies of a single methodology; comparison involving both approaches remain unapproached.
- c. PK Yonge has two third grade classes comprised of 30 students each. Due to the nature of admission to the school these classes are equally balanced with regard to gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The study will make use of this class division and each class will be taught by the same music teacher, via a single music methodology. Text-based methodology centers around the learning of songs in a sequence designed to teach basic elements of music, while Orff-based methodology is more participatory, and centers around movement, song, and instrument playing.
- d. Elementary music is taught to 400 students. 60 will participate in the study, which will be place within the normal instructional schedule. The PI and research consultant have a history of collaboration of involving research projects and educational efforts, both on the elementary and college level.
- e. Procedures for teaching each class will follow similar structures with the instructional strategy being the independent variable. Each class will be taught the same basic musical elements, but through substantially different approaches. Elements evaluated include those identified through the National Standards for Music Education. The same music extracurricular activities, including chorus, recorder club, and dance club, will be available to students from both classes.
- f. Several data-collection and analysis techniques will be used. A music-based assessment, the *Gordon Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation*, will be administered at the beginning of the 2002-2003 class year, and again at the end of the year. Throughout the course of the school year the two classes will be measured using the evaluation tools provided by the *Share the Music* series. Dr. Timothy Brophy, from the University of Florida College of Music, will serve as a resource for this project. He is a renowned expert on music assessment and both he and his student assistants will assist in compiling and charting the data.
- g. The project is significant for its potential impact on music instruction. Music teachers spend comparatively little time with their students, usually seeing them a single time per week. They are also challenged by the task of musically educating an enormous number of students, usually a single music educator will teach every child in a school. Methodologies in music tend to be isolated in approach; proponents of one seldom compare its effectiveness to another. By using a single teacher to teach two different methods the element of teacher efficacy is reduced, and success of the methods themselves, become more apparent (the primary investigator believes that

she has no preference for one methodology over the other. However, the obvious limitation of one person teaching both groups is recognized). If one method is clearly better than the other, this will help teachers choose a more efficient method of meeting state and national standards in their limited student contact time.

- h. Findings will be disseminated through articles and conference presentations, including submission to the NALS journal, NALS conference, the journal of the Florida Music Educators National Conference, and the Florida Music Educators conference.
- 3. The role of the primary investigator, Valerie Austin, will be to instruct both methods, and collect data. The University of Florida resource contact, Dr. Timothy Brophy, will assist as a consultant and resource for the Orff-Schulwerk. He will also assist in data compilation.

Time line:

July 15th, 2002: Instruments purchased.

July 22nd – August 2nd: Two week Orff-Schulwerk workshop. PI will attend and gain the skills necessary to implement the Orff segment of the project.

August 19th: 2002/2003 school year begins. Week of August 19th-23rd devoted to baseline data gathering.

August 26th: Project begins. Project and data-gathering continue throughout school year.

June, 2003: Project ends. Final data collected and evaluation procedures begin.

July 1st, 2003. Final data compiled, article submissions anticipated.

- 2. The current proposal includes collaboration with music professor Lorraine Cross at the A.D. Henderson school, Florida Atlanta University. She will be consulted as to the instructional strategies, and results will be shared with her.

3. Detailed Budget

Orff methodology training. This will be completed via a two-week summer workshop which will provide a level one Orff certification.	425.00
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American Orff-Schulwerk Association membership. provide additional materials and support, as well as the possibility of support grant monies.	60.00
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Purchase of the <i>Gordon Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation</i> instrument.	100.00
Purchase of 5 Orff instruments.	1393.75
Shipping offset.	21.25
Total	\$2000.00

- External funding options include my yearly classroom budget, of which I will contribute the bulk, about \$600.00 towards further instrument purchases, including mallets, to improve the content of the instrumentarium. There is another grant available for a university/laboratory school partnership, which I will become available from the American Orff Society later this year.