

Article Review

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Article Title: Orff-Schulwerk Teaches Musical Responsiveness

Author: Susan Banks Journal: Music Educators Journal 68(7)

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What is the author's purpose?

Banks' purpose of this article is to present the benefits that the Orff process offers towards musical responsiveness in general music classes. She discusses how this approach teaches students to think and feel deeply, as well as how to communicate through music.

What are the salient issues in this article? (i.e. the main issues that provoked/stimulated your thinking)

The first salient issue that provoked my thinking was Banks' statement that, "Music programs must offer children genuine aesthetic experiences as well as a way to intellectually understand music." I feel like this idea is a different perspective of music education that isn't always considered. Obviously, we as teachers would like to guide students to an understanding of music, but considering it as an aesthetic experience -- being rather than acting upon -- is a fresh view on the purpose of our program.

She discusses how Orff activities stimulate sensory awareness. The goal is to engage all of the child's senses using movement, aural, visual, and tactile stimuli, as well as develop their gross motor skills. They achieve this through improvisation. I thought this was interesting because it connects to what we learned about the Dalcroze approach to music education. The use of movement helps to internalize the underlying pulse and overall feeling of the music. I think this leads to the aesthetic experience that Banks considers the goal.

There is one statement in this article that I have a hard time believing to be true. In the section titled **Aesthetic Experiences**, Banks wrote, "Children choose instruments for use after careful consideration of their tone colors and the effect wanted." After working with elementary children for two years of my high school career I can pretty confidently say that my students didn't think about tone colors or the effect created by the instrument. They would usually choose whichever instrument they thought would be the most fun to play. I'm curious as to how you would get young children to make their decision based on such musical elements.

I really appreciate how Banks broke down the Orff process in relation to conceptual learning and also gave examples of each step. The way each segment of a concept is supposed to be taught made me think of the processes Boardman discussed in the articles about the generative approach. I think that the Orff process is another method that encourages generative learning. I also realized that although it takes students through the enactive and symbolic stages,

it misses the iconic stage almost entirely. I think this is a really important step and that it most definitely should not be skipped.

How do you believe this article will impact your personal/professional development as a teacher? (i.e. what insights, connections, comparisons, or considerations resulted from reading this article?)

I've always been interested in the Orff approach and I hope to attend one of their certification/training programs in the future. I really like the idea of incorporating all of the senses into lessons through movement and improvisation. The process of sensory awareness, genuine aesthetic experiences, concepts, skills, and internalization through improvisation seems like a really effective way of learning. Making each lesson as meaningful as possible is really my goal in the long run.

I especially like the expectation of continuous teacher feedback that the Orff method requires. I think a lot of general music teachers tend to shy away from feedback -- mostly when it's negative -- because they don't want to discourage the child. If I begin integrating feedback early on in the students' education, they will become accustomed to receiving critiques and will know how to respond to it in a constructive manner.

Another aspect of the Orff approach that I hope to incorporate is engagement of every student at all times. Since everyone has an instrument, everyone has a responsibility. This will allow the students to absorb as much information as possible because they are always being included in the activities. The process of conceptual learning as described in this article seems to be a good start to achieving this goal, but I would like to add in the iconic stage in order to have the most effective lesson. I might use our iconic boxes for rhythms for a few years before introducing the symbolic notes suggested by Banks.

I think I can use the Orff process to achieve different goals in my own playing as well. I have recently become interested in using a looper pedal while amplifying my horn in order to create entire songs on my own. By using ostinato patterns like Orff lessons do, I think I will have a better chance of creating a more complete composition.