

REVITALIZING THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM WITH ACTIVE MUSIC- MAKING

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(title slide) A comprehensive undergraduate music education curriculum should prepare future elementary general music educators to engage children in active music-making. Each of the four best-known general music approaches—those based on the philosophies and pedagogies of Edwin Gordon, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Zoltan Kodály, and Carl Orff—offers a unique and rich learning environment through which every student’s musicality is cultivated. Yet the constraints of the undergraduate curriculum typically funnel all experiences with these approaches into one or two methods courses, where undergraduate students are introduced to these approaches at the same time as they begin to design learning experiences which may incorporate aspects drawn from each of them.

(slide 2: web site with Mission) The Alliance for Active Music Making, an SMTE Special Interest Group, was formed in response to the growing perception, based on both anecdotal evidence and the findings of a national survey, that many beginning teachers enter the profession with minimal understanding of these widely recognized approaches. (For the history of the Alliance and the report of the 2000 survey, see the Alliance web site, www.allianceamm.org). The stated mission of the AAMM is

To strengthen general music teacher preparation by incorporating the principles shared by widely-recognized music teaching and learning approaches (specifically those of Gordon, Jaques-Dalcroze, Kodály and Orff) and promoting collaboration among practitioners of these approaches toward offering richer experiences in music teacher preparation through offering presentations, courses, symposia and publications about the approaches.

(slide 3: This SIG addresses...) For several years the Alliance has organized numerous presentations by teams of Gordon, Dalcroze, Kodály and Orff practitioners at a variety of national and international conferences. These presentations have been models of collaboration in which representatives of each approach shared their likenesses and differences, with the common goal of strengthening the preparation of general music teachers as well as the professional development of teachers in the field. This paper ventures in a different direction by suggesting ways in which faculty engaged in teacher training can redesign and revitalize the undergraduate curriculum by incorporating these pedagogies into the core music courses such as music theory, aural perception, keyboard skills, applied study and ensembles. Such a process would rely on communication among university colleagues and would require an openness to the possibility of changing established teaching methods. But these collaborative efforts would benefit future music educators with an increased familiarity with the ideas and materials of these approaches before they were encountered in the methods classes. This paper goes on to suggest that these approaches are not only appropriate for children and that their focus on active music making can revitalize the curriculum for all undergraduate music majors.

(slide 4: Orff title slide) Play is one of the most vital aspects of the “Schulwerk” envisioned by Carl Orff. The “child’s play” which is foundational to this approach is recognized as the

essential work of learning. However, this concept of play is not only for young children. Learners of all ages need to play with ideas and play with materials, in order to construct deep understanding of increasingly abstract concepts. In Orff Schulwerk the role of the teacher is to present appropriate materials, ideas, and activities for the students to explore, to guide the exploration, and to respond to the students' play/work with comments and questions that will increase curiosity and lead to further exploration. As undergraduate music education students grow into becoming teachers, their play experiences with the Orff approach can help them develop connections between music theory and history, improvisation and composition, and performance.

(slide 5: What makes it Orff?) Examination of the primary sources of Orff Schulwerk reveals a unique approach to music theory, music history, world music, and interdisciplinary studies. Undergraduate music majors presented with the opportunity to include this material in their studies may look at general music teaching differently as a result. The sequence of musical examples in the original five volumes of *Music for Children* and *Rhythmische Übung* is based on elemental style as a guiding principle, using basic "building blocks" of music with increasing complexity which is open to continual exploration. This approach can have a profound effect which goes much deeper than the minimal understanding of those who have only experienced "Orff" as an approach where children play barred instruments using the pentatonic scale. Instead, experience with the primary sources of Orff Schulwerk has the potential to impact both teaching and learning in every area of music study.

(slide 6: Orff approach in teacher preparation) The rationale for including Orff Schulwerk as a part of undergraduate music teacher preparation has several practical aspects:

- Through using elemental style principles and the "building blocks" based on the elements of music, students develop clearer teaching processes and they are able to construct better learning sequences.
- Understanding of sequential curriculum development is enhanced when the national standards are seen through the lens of *playing with* music and *making up* music.
- The combination of engaging activities making music and a successful teaching/learning sequence produces a high rate of retention and happiness for beginning teachers.

To sum up, the potential value of incorporating the Orff Schulwerk approach in undergraduate music teacher education has not been explored in sufficient depth at this time. As programs evolve, those who are seeking a more wholistic approach to teacher education and training may find the ideas of Carl Orff worthy of serious consideration.

(slide 7: Gordon title slide) Music Learning Theory is a theory, a set of ideas, for how we learn when we learn music. Developed by Edwin E. Gordon, Music Learning Theory is based on the development of audiation, that is, "hearing and comprehending in one's mind the sound of music that is not, or may never have been, physically present . . .". That is, audiation is music thinking. Audiation is to music as thinking is to language. Audiation is unique to music, yet we develop it similar to how we develop language by developing listening, speaking/performing, audiating/thinking, reading, and writing vocabularies. As we develop our audiation, we may become independent musicians through music understanding, enabling us for music appreciation.

Gordon explains that there are six stages and eight types of audiation. Through the stages and types of audiation, we develop the breadth and depth of our music expression. Though children are not born audiating, they are born with the aptitude, or potential to audiate. For optimum audiation development, Gordon recommends that children be guided through three types and seven stages of preparatory audiation during the first six or seven years of life.

According to Gordon, music aptitude is developmental from birth to approximately age nine, and stabilized thereafter. Gordon developed the *Music Aptitude Profile* and the *Advanced Measures of Music Audiation* designed to measure the aptitude of students with stabilized music aptitude. *Audie*, *Primary Measures of Music Audiation*, and *Intermediate Measures of Music* were developed to measure the music aptitudes of children in the developmental aptitude stage. Teachers should measure the music aptitudes of their students in order to individualize and improve music instruction.

When organizing music instruction teachers who use Music Learning Theory implement moveable-do tonal solfege and beat function-based rhythm solfege as they lead students in a skill learning sequence that includes discrimination learning and inference learning. Through discrimination learning students develop performing, reading, and writing tonal and rhythm music vocabularies through imitation. Through inference learning students use tonal and rhythm vocabularies to make generalizations, improvise, and compose.

(slide 8: framework) For music teacher educators, Music Learning Theory provides:

- Common ground for music learning and musicianship through audiation
- Information on how to use music aptitude tests
- Music learning sequences from early childhood through adulthood
- Vocabulary for discussing music learning from any approach
- A vehicle for whole-part-whole learning
- A medium for including any techniques from any approaches that promote musicianship through audiation

(slide 9: MLT can revitalize) As we consider revitalizing the undergraduate music education curriculum, Music Learning Theory practitioners surveyed for this paper recommend the following. Music teacher educators should:

- develop understanding of skills necessary for imparting successful early childhood, elementary and secondary music teaching and learning among university music faculty,
- use consistent tonal solfège and rhythm solfège beneficial for audiation development,
- increase undergraduate musicianship skills, and
- increase pre-service fieldwork opportunities.

Music teacher educators who were surveyed for this paper recognize that students who are grounded in musical, sequential approach to music learning may be well prepared to enter student teaching and early teaching experiences. By understanding their personal music learning processes, they may be equipped to facilitate their students' music learning processes. One respondent wrote:

I find that students [with an Music Learning Theory background and experiences in Dalcroze, Orff, and Kodaly] enter the student teaching experience with a strong philosophical/theoretical/methodological foundation that serves them well from that point forward. I also find that many students are able to increase their personal aural/singing skills substantially during each methods course, resulting in the strongest possible skill set for teaching at the end of their five years. These strategies provide a well-organized approach to personal skill development that students eventually understand well enough to be able to guide themselves through personal skill development even while teaching. This lasts well into, and through, their first years of teaching. Finally, I find the first-year teachers [with an Music Learning Theory background and experiences in Dalcroze, Orff, and Kodaly] bring a solid set of curriculum development skills to their initial position.

(slide 10: Dalcroze title slide) Emile Jaques-Dalcroze experienced a remarkable epiphany in his first teaching job as professor of solfège at the Conservatory of Music in Geneva. He became aware that his students might be good musical technicians who could read, write and perform the notes on the page, but their musical performances were wooden, lacking feeling and expression. Yet the same students seemed to respond naturally to music they heard by tapping their toes, nodding their heads, or moving their bodies, even changing the size and character of these involuntary movements as the dynamic level or emotional quality of the music changed. Dalcroze came to the realization that the synthesis of the mind, body, and resulting emotions is fundamental to all meaningful learning in music.

(slide11: hallmarks) Believing that the whole human body is the first instrument that must be trained, Dalcroze taught that every musician should strive to be sensitive and expressive, and to express music through purposeful movement, sound, thought, feeling, and creativity. Thus some of the hallmarks of Dalcroze's teaching include the development of inner hearing that internalizes melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements; musical experience through sound, speech, gesture and movement that precede notation; facility with melodic and rhythmic solfège; and improvisatory movement that responds to music (which may also be improvised on piano or other instruments).

(slide 12: elements) Dalcroze-trained teachers have suggested that an undergraduate curriculum that reflects the philosophy of Jaques-Dalcroze might look like this:

- Courses in the fundamentals of music and overviews of music literature would encourage students to illustrate musical elements such as meter, dynamics, phrasing, and form through gesture and movement.
- Theory and ear-training classes would teach students through multiple senses (aural, visual, kinesthetic and tactile).
- Piano proficiency classes would require improvisational skill on the keyboard
- Applied study would recognize and foster without apology this mind-body-emotion connection.
- Ensemble rehearsals would encourage student musicians to think and hear their pieces internally without playing their instruments or singing.

Music education majors who learn theory, piano and applied music with this approach will be better prepared for and comfortable with the study of Dalcroze pedagogy when they arrive in

methods class or a weekend workshop. As importantly, since the typical undergraduate music core curriculum confines students' bodies to desk chairs and their minds to printed notation, the incorporation of these elements into the curriculum can revitalize the learning process for all students.

(slide 13: Kodály title slide) It is interesting that one impetus for Zoltan Kodály to oversee the reform of music education in Hungary was that he, like Jaques-Dalcroze, was disgruntled at the shortcomings of his college-age students, although in Kodály's case, the students at the Liszt Academy were not up to his standards in music literacy. Many more American educators are familiar with and trained in the Kodály approach than that of Dalcroze, and it is not unusual to find the common practices associated with Kodály (moveable *do* solfège, Curwen hand signs) embedded in music theory courses or choral ensembles. Teachers who know and appreciate the contribution of Kodály, however, will note that his contribution is also a philosophy about the role of music in society and in the lives of both children and adults as well as a "method" of music instruction.

(slide 14: philosophy) This philosophy is that music is meant to develop one's entire self: intellect, personality, and emotions. Music is a humanizing force in contemporary society, it motivates people for good, and it connects them with the greatness of the past as well as the present. Kodály believed that the human voice was the foundation of musical development—our first, most accessible and most affordable instrument. He considered the folk music of the students' own culture their musical mother tongue, and believed that all early musical experiences should be based on it. In addition, as their natural language, folk music formed the basis for the development of musical literacy, which he considered the birthright of all people.

Kodály also made a strong case for presenting music "of the highest artistic value," whether folk music or composed music. "Only the best for the children" is one of his trademark statements. For Kodály, "the best" included in large part Western classical art music, but also authentic musics from the folk traditions around the world.

(Slide 15: elements) There are many exemplary university educators who have adopted Kodály's philosophy in their teaching. Some suggestions for a curriculum that reflects Kodály philosophy would include:

- Development of facility in moveable *do* solfège, including *la*-based minor, in music theory, sight singing and choral ensembles
- Experience with Curwen hand signs in sight singing classes
- Introduction of rhythm syllables in theory, sight singing and ensembles
- Use of themes from "musical masterworks" for dictation and transcription exercises
- Similar use of folk song material in sight reading and dictation exercises
- Inclusion of folk song-based repertoire for performance ensembles and students of applied music, with background into the origins of the songs

(slide 16) The responsibility for being agents of a curricular sea change of this sort rests with us, the music teacher educators. Convincing colleagues in other areas of the music department to consider altering their familiar and time-honored teaching methods may take all of our persuasive powers. Nonetheless, we believe that this kind of collaborative effort is an important

investment in the preparation of future general music teachers, and one that would energize the musical preparation of all undergraduates. Active music making is not for children only!