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Running Head: ORFF SCHULWERK TEACHERS' USE OF IMPROVISATION

A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF ORFF SCHULWERK TEACHERS' USE OF
IMPROVISATION IN THE UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GENERAL MUSIC
CLASSROOM

By

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ORFF SCHULWERK TEACHERS' USE OF IMPROVISATION

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Multi-Case Study of Orff Schulwerk Teachers' Use of Improvisation in the Upper

Elementary School General Music Classroom

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The Orff Schulwerk approach is an improvisational approach to teaching general music. The American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) has developed guidelines for teaching improvisation in each of the three certification levels, but very little empirical research on the actual classroom practices of Orff Schulwerk trained teachers currently exists. The purpose of this multi-case study was to examine Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators use of improvisation in the upper elementary school general music classroom. The six participants were interviewed twice and two to three days of site visits were made to each participant's classroom. Each of the six teachers is presented with brief introductions followed by two scenes of improvisation that highlight within-case themes such as word-chaining, using visual images to inspire improvisation, blues improvisations, melodic ostinati, and movement improvisation.

Cross-case findings include: improvisation instruction defined by specific characteristics, the use of varied musical sources for improvisation inspiration, and

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differentiation strategies innate to the Orff Schulwerk teaching process. The findings of this dissertation show that these teacher-participants use an ontogenetic approach to teaching improvisation that gradually releases responsibility from teacher-led to student-choice in musical improvisations. This study concludes that teachers of upper elementary school general music classes can teach improvisation through restrictions of improvisational choices that expand over time and by giving their students time to practice all students can be taught to improvise.

KEYWORDS: Orff Schulwerk, Improvisation, General Music, Upper Elementary, Teacher Planning, Lesson Planning, Teacher Behaviors, Zone of Proximal Development, Gradual Release of Responsibility

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For my children, Joshua and Ashley.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In the Western art music tradition improvisation was a common skill that all musicians possessed prior to the wide spread availability of the printing press (Moore, 1992). Today many classically-trained musicians are not trained in improvisation and are unable to improvise on their instrument or with their voice (Campbell, 2009; Solis, 2009). In its early history, Western Classical music was often improvised, but the increased availability of printed music in the 18th and 19th century afforded musicians the ability to realize and perform music as the composer intended (Moore, 1992). The rise of virtuoso performers and the culture of presenting technically precise performances of the printed page representing the composer's intent, lessened the creative choices of the performer.

Many college and university classical music programs do not train their students in improvisation (Byo, 1999; Campbell, 2009; Della Pietra & Campbell, 1995; Mishra, Day, Littles, & Vandewalker, 2011), but the rise of diverse music education methodologies and approaches in the early through mid 1900s has been a catalyst in addressing improvisation in Western Classical music. There are many methodologies and approaches to teaching music that address improvisation in elementary general music, the four most prominent are: Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff Schulwerk. Briefly, the role of improvisation in these methods is described in the paragraphs below.

Music Learning Theory was developed from years of research into how children learn music. The basis of music learning theory is audiation, a term coined by Edwin Gordon. Audiation is when you can hear music, either from written notation or

improvised, in your mind when no music is present. In Music Learning Theory improvisation is the last step, students can only improvise once they have a command of the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic elements of music and have developed strong skills in audiation (Gordon, 1988; 1997; Valerio, Seaman, Yap, Santucci & Tu, 2006).

Swiss composer Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) observed a disconnect between the way music theory was taught, and the emotions, sensations, and experiences of students resulting in mechanical performances devoid of expression (Juntunen, 2016). As a result of Dalcroze's training in motion, the Dalcroze method, also known as eurhythmics, is divided into three inter-related parts: solfege rhythmique, training in pitch and theory, and music improvisation. Jaques-Dalcroze believed that improvisation was basic to life, "as an expression of life, and as life itself" (Abramson, 1980, p. 68).

Zoltán Kodály's (1882-1967) main goal was to create a musically literate society. The Kodály method uses familiar folk songs as a way to lead students to higher art music (Choksy, 1988). The use of solfege and singing is not exclusive to the Kodály method, but it is the hallmark of the methodology. There are a number of studies that focus on improvisation using the Kodály method and more specifically solfege-singing improvisation (Dos Santos & Del Ben, 2004; Kalmar & Balasko, 1987; Laczó, 1981).

The one approach that is directly derived from improvisation is Orff Schulwerk. Orff Schulwerk is sometimes also referred to as Orff-Schulwerk, but for the sake of consistency "Orff Schulwerk" will be employed in this study. The present study investigates the teaching of improvisation by Orff Schulwerk certified music educators.

Orff Schulwerk

Carl Orff (1895-1982) was a German composer and one of the major influences on the development of the approach to music education known as Orff Schulwerk, which was developed out of the gymnastics and dance movement education of Germany in the years following World War I. This approach was originally designed as an accompaniment for gymnastics and dance, not as a means of teaching music. It later became an approach to teaching music after Carl Orff was commissioned to write music to be played by children for the 1936 Berlin Olympics and subsequent radio broadcasts.

New German Dance

Following World War I, there was significant interest in new approaches and forms of gymnastics and expressive dance in Germany. These schools of gymnastics and dance were privately run and worked to develop and discover new dance forms, rather than pass on traditional dance knowledge (Kugler, 2013). These rhythm and dance schools included Laban's Schule Für Kunst, Jaques-Dalcroze's Bildungsanstalt, Mary Wigman's school in Dresden, and Dorothee Günther's Günther-Schule. The rhythm and dance movement was a more open, expressive dance-movement where dancers explored ways that they could use their own body through representation of Greek sculptures and open-air improvisations, sometimes nude (Kugler, 2013).

According to Carl Orff (1963), there was renewed interest in the 1920s in sports, gymnastics, and dancing, and the teachings of Jacques-Dalcroze, Laban, and their student Mary Wigman, who had created a new kind of expressive dancing. Orff would soon pair with a dance and gymnastics teacher, Dorothee Günther, in a new endeavor to connect this new dance movement with music. Günther envisioned creating a viable dance

expression; she found eurhythmics to be too subservient to the music (Hepburn, 2011), and aligned much of her philosophy of dance instead with Laban, and the work of his student Mary Wigman. “Laban’s roll [sic] as a facilitator that created an exposure to the unconscious, which frees powers of a primeval in which one acquires the vocabulary and the grammar of the new language for movement” (Hepburn, 2011, p. 27) is what Günther admired most about his teaching style. Dorothee Günther, in addition to studying Bess Mensendieck (a type of therapeutic gymnastics), studied gymnastics with Hedwig Hagemann, eurhythmics at Hellerau with Émile Jacque-Dalcroze, and Expressive movement with Rudolph Laban (Hepburn, 2011).

The Günther-Schule

In 1924, Dorothee Günther and Carl Orff founded the Günther-Schule as a training institute for gymnastics and elemental music and for dance as an art form (Keetman, 2011). Orff saw the possibility of creating a new kind of rhythmic education, realizing his ideas of “a reciprocal interpenetration of movement and music education” (Orff, 1963, p. 136). Many of the movement schools (Schule) integrated music in some form into their curriculum, but the Günther-Schule was the first school that had a founder and director, Carl Orff, who was a musician. Orff found the ability to create unique musical work within the experimental field of German Dance (Orff, 1963).

The curriculum at the Günther-Schule was divided into three branches: therapy gymnastics, rhythmic-gymnastic training, and dance training (Kugler, 2013). All of the subjects were taught in groups, with only recorder, piano, and timpani lessons taught privately. Standardized exercise sequences were not taught; each student had an individual training plan in accordance with their specific gifts and aptitudes.

By the year 1933 the National Socialist State tightened its grip on Germany and influenced many aspects of culture and business. Günther was unable to continue to run her school independently, so “she decided to join the Nazi Party and to register her two most important tutors, Maja Lex and Gunild Keetman for enrolment [sic]” (Kugler, 2013, p. 35). But, unlike Günther, “Orff took no part in this action; he was neither a member of the Nazi Party nor of any of its associated organizations” (Kugler, 2013, pp. 35-36).

Günther justified her decision to join the Nazi Party as follows:

Since the continued acceptance of the Günther School by the Reich's Ministry in Berlin, even though it had a good opinion of my school, could not be made safe without Party allegiance, I quickly decided to join the Party in May 1933 and thereby secured for the school and my colleagues an undisturbed further period of activity, as far as the gradually increasing restrictive conditions allowed. (Haselbach, 2013, p. 51)

Michael Kater (2000) presents evidence in his book, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, that shows that Orff was at least complicit with the Nazis, but this evidence is not substantiated by any other sources. The Günther-Schule, however, did close on September 25, 1944, by order of the German Minister of Works from the Ministry of Culture, and did not reopen.

Carl Orff's Music at the Günther-Schule

Orff's earliest musical memories were of “church music, wind bands, and playing the piano with his mother” (Regner, 2013, p. 170). He was also influenced by a gift he received when he was ten; “a puppet theatre – his first means of experimenting in the field of music/drama. Plot, dialogue, music, production, and performance did it all himself [sic]. The family encouraged him by listening attentively” (Regner, 2013, p. 172). The work done with Dorothee Günther began, for Orff, as continuation of theatre

work that he had previously done, and a way to experiment with music and movement in a symbiotic environment.

Orff published many texts about the interplay between music and movement, calling for the unity of music and movement rhythm. He criticized other gymnastic schools for attempting to awaken their students understanding of music merely through the study of harmony and figured bass. When starting musical training with a young, untrained person, Orff suggested not to “start with example or given situation, but to create possibilities that set no conditions and yet stimulate in the adult the still latent, lively drive to play” (Günther, 1932, p. 127). In the beginning, physical activity and attention to rhythmic sound and movement together, as well as making music together as a group were essential. Orff attempted to approach all music in its most natural, organic way. In his 1931 article, “Movement and Music Education as a Unity,” Orff described the use of improvisation:

Over its entire range the teaching starts with improvisation, making use mainly of rhythmic forms; establishing pitch and notation arises naturally as an outcome and the latter is only used for larger forms. As a matter of principle no written music is introduced to the students at first. It is their own sketches, serving initially as aids to memory, that lead on to the practice of reading and playing other music. Dance accompaniments and independent orchestral pieces often arise out of improvisation and are written down by the individual players at first as parts. They are then brought together into scores, after which the whole is revised. It should be clear that a thoroughly trained ensemble is necessary to bring this about. (p. 148)

The lessons, driven by improvisation, were done in a group to inspire and educate the students through a collaborative, active process of creating.

The term *primitive music* is often associated with Orff and his methods of teaching music. Kugler (2013) recalls the discovery of primitive art at the beginning of the 20th century as an adoption of non-European Art. “In spite of the persistent, pejorative

added meaning attached to the adjective *primitive*, artists such as Gauguin and Picasso meant something positive and exactly that sense of expressing admiration” (Kugler, 2013, p. 17). Orff defined primitive music as “the music of children (primeval music, not acquired through education), physically bound with movement in a self-evident unity, and he compares it to the music of primitives all over the world” (Kugler, 2013, p. 60).

Primitive music is everything that comes from this root; that recognizes the unbroken unity of music and movement expression as a foundation; that can only be some kind of music – two factors that can of course always flow together – but the binding unity of the two together that cannot be imagined away, that it is there from the outset, this is the decisive point. This sensorimotor unity that we find among young children is also to be found among primitive peoples, in their songs and dances, in the performance of their music. (Orff, 1933a, p. 158)

Orff's approach was strongly connected to primitive music cultures, especially traditional African music. He taught music through speech, rhythm, and movement in a way that owes much to African culture. The approach relies heavily on the use of drums and dance to teach music first through rhythm. Orff (1978) explains:

The drum induces dance. Dance has the closest relationship to music. My idea and the task that I had set myself was a regeneration of music through movement, through dance. It is difficult to teach rhythm. One can only release it. Rhythm is no abstract concept, it is life itself. Rhythm is active and produces effects, it is the unifying power of language, music and movement. (p. 17)

In the “Rhythmics” classes, changes of tempo, dynamics, asymmetrical time signatures, and phrasing were all learned, or worked out, through movement and dance or speech.

Through experimentation at the Günther-Schule, Orff developed a learning sequence from the body (movement and body percussion), to non-pitched percussion, to melody (through singing and use of melodic instruments). Orff found that the rhythmic to melodic practice, with its close relationship to primitive instruments, also had translated to Western art instruments (Günther, 1933).

Over time the instrumental ensemble, commonly called the instrumentarium, became fully developed at the Günther-Schule. Orff (1978) explained the relationship of the instruments to the music that form the ensemble:

With the primitive instrument, the posture, sitting position and the entirely physical relationship with it precludes the danger of thinking of the instrument as a separate object. This, together with the sound experience, is the basis for everything that follows. At this point some 'instructions' are interposed. The unique, movement-oriented instrumental ensemble, these primitive tools for producing sound, from the child's rattle to the demonic gongs and bells, this primitive demonic world of sound, that leads to imperceptibly from tone to play, from noise to music is the starting point. The building up of such an orchestra, as with the progression of the teaching, begins mostly with the rhythm instruments. From the simplest rattles (not to mention, stamping, clapping, humming, and singing), drums and woodblocks to the timpani with 'tunable' pitch; from the simplest triangle to cymbals, gongs and glockenspiels it develops into rhythmic melody by means of all possible kinds of barred instruments (xylophones, metallophones) and to the pure melody carriers, the recorders (not to mention a large number of pipes, panpipes etc., certainly the most primitive of wind instruments), and to the first representatives of the string instruments, fidels (available in soprano, alto and tenor ranges) which concludes the last group of primitive chordal instruments for the present. (p. 100)

Many of the instruments used by Orff were adapted from the primitive instruments of the gamelan (Indonesian music) and Africa. The xylophones and metallophones were adapted and built by the famous German instrument builder Karl Maendler, and the recorder was used by recommendation and influence of the German musicologist Curt Sachs. The instruments at the Günther-Schule included two grand and two upright pianos, a pair of kettledrums, 4 dance timpani, a bass drum, 3 tenor drums, a snare drum, a tom-tom, several frame drums, tambourines, 4 double-skinned (Chinese) drums, cymbals and antique cymbals of various sizes, finger cymbals, triangles, woodblocks, slit drums, jingles, 6 metal bells, a gong, 3 tam-tams, 2 large chromatic xylophones (in traditional cradle form), several alto and soprano xylophones in box form, a bass xylophone, a bass

metallophone, an alto xylophone, and several soprano and alto glockenspiels (Kugler, 2013, p. 35).

The types of music taught, outside of the students' created improvisatory music, were folk songs. Günther and Orff believed that a popular folk song sung by dancers was more meaningful than that performed by a classical singer and that children playing was more meaningful than a drilled dance (Günther, 1932). They were seeking the original rhythmic essence of primal music and melodically the music was based in pentatonic melodies that are found in every native, children's, and folk song (Günther, 1933).

The Günther-Schule was a gymnastics and dance/movement school, intended for the study of dance by young adult dancers. The popularity of the Günther-Schule and the musical methods of Orff drew people interested in the training from outside of the dance community who were musicians. These musicians found interest in the movement training and recognized its value to music education (Orff, 1978).

Orff's work at the Günther-Schule grew to be beyond what Orff could manage and he began searching for colleagues that could share the load of the work and continue developing his method of teaching music through movement. Gunild Keetman had been a student at the Günther-Schule and Orff's pupil. Keetman took over the basic rhythmic teaching and all of the practical music work except for the piano lessons. She was an expert in recorder playing and recorder improvisation (Kugler, 2013).

Music Written for Children

Orff had often been invited to teach Schulwerk (school work) courses in Berlin and other cities throughout Germany. In late 1932 "Orff was asked to take charge of

introducing the Schulwerk into the Berlin schools, training special teachers and overseeing the experiment” (Shamrock, 2007, p. 4).

In 1934 Carl Orff was asked to compose music for children to be featured at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. About 6,000 students from the Berlin schools were to perform in the opening ceremony. Orff tasked Keetman with managing the rehearsals for the opening ceremony of the Olympics and she wrote much of the music for the performance as well. This was the world’s first exposure to Orff’s approach to music education and was the pivotal event that turned the focus from purely music for the dance school to broader music education.

In 1948 Walter Panofsky, an old friend and colleague, found a copy of the 1936 Olympic performance and played it for the person in charge of the Bavarian Radio’s school broadcasts. She asked Orff to compose music to be played by children in a series of educational broadcasts to be aired to schools. Orff recalls: “What I was now being offered was something completely different. A music exclusively for children that could be played, sung and danced by them but that could also in a similar way be invented by them” (Orff, 1978, p. 212). As the case of the Olympic ceremony, Orff left much of the writing and rehearsing for the broadcasts to Gunild Keetman.

Development of Orff Schulwerk

Orff’s work in the Günther-Schule was originally intended to accompany dance, not to be used in music education. “Orff’s idea of the elemental is not educational but intuitively artistic” (Hepburn, 2011, p. 20). But, Orff had described his primitive music making as music of the child, so this concept of the primitive music was being prepared for children. He believed that elemental music was inherent in humans and could be a

bridge to more artistic art music. Along with Gunild Keetman, he published books of music demonstrating the different possibilities of elemental music through rhythm, body percussion, speech, and instrumental pieces in pentatonic, different modes, and functional harmony.

Elemental Music. Orff described the music that was made at the Günther-Schule and later in his Schulwerk as “elemental.” This term is often misrepresented and misused when describing the music of Carl Orff. Some use the terms elemental and primitive interchangeably, while others believe that “elemental” refers to “elements” of music. For Orff elemental music was “word and movement, everything that awakens and develops the powers of the spirit, this is the ‘humus’ of the spirit” (Orff, 1963, pp. 152-154). Orff continued to define elemental music:

What is elemental? The word in Latin form *elementarius* means: Pertaining to the elements, primeval, rudimentary, treating of first principles. What then is elemental music? Elemental music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance and speech. It is music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato and rondo. Elemental music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and to experience it, and suitable for the child. (1963, p. 144)

Orff believed that elemental music practice is a prerequisite for any serious musical study. He suggested two aims of elemental music practice: 1. music that corresponds to the child’s nature and capacity for feeling and 2. an organically developed music that comes near to that of folk music (Orff, 1933a).

Orff Schulwerk Music Publications. The first of the Schulwerk books was a volume entitled *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* (1933b) (rhythmic-melodic practice) written by Orff and originally published in 1931 by Schott. *Rhythmisch-melodische*

Übung “were small collections of pieces for recorders or for various groups of instruments, some by Hans Bergese who was also a colleague of Orff at this time” (Keetman, 2011, p. 54), and some by Keetman. The most popular and widely used publications on the Orff Schulwerk are the five volumes of *Music for Children* that were originally published between 1949-1954.

The *Music for Children* volumes are collections of improvisations that were notated; they are not intended to be accurately replicated by students. Orff explains, “the Schulwerk is a collection of models that seek on inverted paths to lead from where they have come, to improvisation” (Orff, 1933a, p. 166). Each of the volumes contains concepts that can be developed with students sequentially. Volume I, published in 1950, is devoted to tonal material in pentatonic and to rhythmic and melodic exercises. The second *Music for Children* volume, published in 1952, adds the fourth and seventh scale degrees to melodies in major. Volume III, published in 1953, presents melodies in major that require a harmonized accompaniment, first I-V and then I-IV-V. Volume IV, published in 1954, contains melodic material in minor – Aeolian, Dorian, and Phrygian forms, first with drone-based accompaniment and then with appropriate shifting chord patterns – i-VII, i-III, etc. Volume V, also published in 1954, presents minor melodic material requiring harmony-change accompaniment using i-iv-v (Shamrock, 2007). Published in 1977, *Paralipomena* was a supplementary volume that included the omitted major modes, Lydian and Mixolydian, from the second volume, and several pentatonics from the first volume. There are minimal instructions in the *Music for Children* volumes, so Gunild Keetman published a book in 1974, entitled *Elementaria: First Acquaintance with Orff Schulwerk*, that serves as a guide to using the volumes.

The compositions that are published in the volumes are notated improvisations that served as examples and a guide to the possibilities of music making with children and as such it was suggested to add, take away, change or rearrange parts to suit the needs of the students in any given environment. "The four types of activity described – exploration, imitation, improvisation, and creation – need not follow in that order, but may be used in whatever sequence or combinations needed to accomplish the goals of a single or multiple lesson plan" (Shamrock, 2007, p. 19). The learning music media in the Schulwerk are speech, movement, singing, and instrument playing. These are used through the learning process of exploration, imitation, improvisation, and creation.

Orff Schulwerk as Music Education

All musical activities in Orff Schulwerk begin with musical play and the idea that music and movement represents the human spirit (humus). Orff Schulwerk is an active experience, not a passive activity. Hermann Regner (2013) explains:

What is special about Orff Schulwerk is that Elemental Music and Movement Education is not only thought of as a school for singing at sight, for instance, or a school for composing with sound and effect, or a basic training for pianists, but that in a much more general way it wishes to lay the foundation for a musical attitude, that allows the individual and the social group to realise [sic] themselves, to affirm themselves in musical interaction, to live in music. (p. 192)

Orff believed that speaking, singing, poetry, music, movement, playing, and dancing are not separate in the world of the child, and this natural instinct to combine all of these media should be encouraged to foster a child's latent creativity.

While Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman have ideas for sequencing musical concepts, Orff Schulwerk is an approach, not a strict methodology. Orff, like most pedagogues, holds singing in high regard, but unlike most does not believe that it is the first

instrument of musical expression. Willhelm Keller (2011) explains Orff's position on the order of instruments, including singing:

Neither primitive nor advanced cultures developed instrumental music out of singing; nor does biogenesis observe any similar tendencies. In the early stages of musical culture, as in all human activity, rhythmically expressive body movements were just as important for the performance of the prototype of instrumental music as vocal expression. No child will keep still while he is singing. Clapping, stamping, slapping and dancing, in fact play with the innate 'instruments' of a person's own body, are the primal rhythmic gestures that have always accompanied the melodic form of expression in singing, even if in the interplay of the various activities one or other of them may predominate. (p. 122)

In the Orff approach, movement and speech, as was the case at the Günther-Schule, are the first steps to music making, coming before singing.

Teaching in Orff Schulwerk is done in a group environment. Keetman, in *Elementaria* (1974), discusses that a teacher may choose to use the Schulwerk exclusively or choose to use the approach as a supplement to their music teaching. The tonal sequence, as in the Kodály method, begins "start with the two-note call, which, followed by the three-note melodies is built upon until the semi-tone free pentatonic scale is reached" (Keetman, 1974, p. 12). Keetman noted that since the pentatonic scale is absent of any half steps it is possible to play together in an ensemble, free from dissonance.

Rhythmically the building blocks are two beat rhythms in 2/4 and 3/4 time. Children's rhymes and folk songs are used as the basis for the early rhythm instruction. Movement and body percussion – clapping, patschen (patting one's thighs), stamping, and finger snapping – are further modes of expression in elemental music. In *Elementaria* (1974), Keetman describes the use of the notation, for teachers only, and the progression from the body and speech to non-pitched percussion, and later to melodic instruments,

both barred and wind (recorders). Rhymes and songs begin with the most basic single note drone accompaniment, before moving on to borduns (the root and the fifth of the chord), and later to more functional harmonic structures.

Beginning musical forms are binary and branch out to traditional Rondo forms. Melodically, “the main body of sound is provided by the xylophones, brilliance and high resonance by the glockenspiels, swinging and sustained bell-like sounds by the metallophones” (Keetman, 1974, p. 60). There is a strong focus on proper mallet and playing technique and the belief that students should be able to play independently of their singing so that they can play and sing at the same time. Keetman gives suggestions on how to extend pieces of music and how to introduce improvisation.

In keeping with Orff's definition of elemental music, where music and movement cannot be divorced from one another, half of the book *Elementaria* is devoted to movement training. The movement training begins with walking and then moves to running/jogging and skipping. Both a relaxed posture and limber body are necessary to begin the movement activities and the transfer to instruments. Movements are then discussed in terms of movement pathways, body facings, and body levels. The students play rhythmic instruments during movement activities as they move. Musical feeling and form are felt through the movements of the body for ease of transfer to other musical activities, such as singing and playing instruments (Orff, 1932).

Though Orff Schulwerk is associated strongly with the instrument playing, it is possible to use the Schulwerk with no instruments except for one's own body. The approach is adaptable for any and all situations and is engaging through its use of movement and student choice. Many countries throughout the world have adapted the

Schulwerk, using their own folk music and putting their own stamp on a so-called method of teaching the approach. In the United States the American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) is very active, has grant opportunities for teachers and scholars, and publishes their own peer-reviewed journal, the *Orff Echo*.

The number of authors who publish Orff arrangements are too numerous to count and they cross all cultural lines, helping to unite the multi-cultural nature of the American schools. The openness of the Schulwerk allows the adoption of new instruments, such as the ukulele, in ways that seem natural. Since Orff Schulwerk is not a methodology, many educators that follow other methodologies – Kodály, Gordon, Dalcroze, Suzuki, etc. – also use some aspects of the Schulwerk.

Orff Schulwerk was originally developed as a musical symbiosis with dance to create a new artistic form, but has been adapted, throughout the world, as an effective approach to engaging children in and teaching children music in a natural way.

Rationale

The focus of this study is on how expert Orff Schulwerk practitioners integrate improvisation into their elementary curriculum. Since Orff Schulwerk uses a large quantity of musical material published by Carl Orff, Gunild Keetman, and many other composers of elemental music, there is a need to examine which materials are used by expert Orff Schulwerk practitioners to foster creativity, and more specifically improvisation in their students. For this study, expert Orff Schulwerk practitioners are defined as American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) certified teacher educators. These are the educators who hold AOSA certification, have developed curriculum, and now teach other educators in AOSA certified teacher education courses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the activities used and situations created by expert Orff Schulwerk teachers that allow their upper elementary (3rd-6th Grade) school students to improvise in the general music classroom. In addition, this study will investigate the materials these experts use to foster improvisation in their general music classroom.

Research Questions

This study will investigate three primary research questions. These research questions are:

1. How is improvisation presented/taught/fostered/integrated in the upper elementary school general music classroom by expert Orff Schulwerk teachers?
2. What specific materials (books and other resources) do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers use to teach or foster improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms?
3. Do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers change their improvisation instruction based on the developmental level of the improviser?

Chapter II: Literature Review

Musical improvisation is an important element of music making that is used in most musical traditions throughout the world. Improvisation is actively performing music in the moment—likened to having a conversation. Like a child learning to speak, improvisation is developed through listening, babble, and eventually leading to full, coherent conversations that make sense to the skilled and unskilled listener alike (Dobbins, 1980; Marshall, 2004; Miranda, 2015; Riveire, 2006; Scott, 2007; Volz, 2005).

In recent decades, research in the field of creativity has brought interest to improvisation and composition in music. Composition and improvisation are the most cited musically creative activities in music (Barrett, 2006; Biasutti, 2017; Coulson & Burke, 2013; Economidou Stavrou, 2013; Guderian, 2012; Hargreaves, 1999; Hargreaves, 2012a; Kiehn, 2003; Kokotsaki, 2012; Norgaard, 2017; Running, 2008; Sovansky, Wieth, Francis, & McIlhagga, 2016). There are varying definitions and thoughts on creativity: psychologists like Csikzentmihályi (1996) and others have done extensive research in the area of creativity and have differing views about creativity and levels of creativity. In this chapter I will present literature on the historical background of improvisation in music, creativity philosophy, teaching improvisation versus facilitating improvisation, how teachers learn to teach improvisation, how general music methods address improvisation, and the role of improvisation in Orff Schulwerk. I will conclude this chapter by articulating the need for the current study.

Historical Background of Improvisation in Music

Music improvisation is one of the earliest forms of music making by mankind. The music of the Greeks was widely improvised and is one of the reasons why there is

such a small repertoire of their music known to us today (Reese, 1940). While improvisation was once the most common approach to music making in the Western Classical Tradition that is no longer the case.

There are a number of reasons for the decline of classical musician's ability to improvise: the prevalence of printed music, cultural changes, and the rise of the virtuoso performer. The increasing access to printed music in the 18th and 19th century allowed musicians to know the composer's intentions more precisely. As learning from printed notation rose and the increasing popularity of the virtuoso performer rose, the focus of performance was re-creation, rather than creation, with little deviation from the printed score. As learning and passing music from teacher to student through oral means was on the decline in Western Classical music, the loss of performing music through aural means and the stunting of musical creativity rose (Campbell, 1989). Non-Western music, Western popular, and folk music traditions still hold improvisation in a central role of their performance practice, but Western Classical musicians improvised less and less and many skilled musicians are incapable of improvising with their voice or on their instrument at all.

In recent decades research in music related to improvisation has increased. Three specific areas of research relating to improvisation are: music as creativity (Hargreaves, 2012a; Kleinmintz, Goldstein, Mayseless, Abecasis, & Shamay-Tsoory, 2014); multicultural music (Campbell, 1991); and jazz education, which was at one time banned in many schools (Mark & Gary, 2007). These three areas will be discussed in the following section, beginning with the promotion of creativity.

Creativity Philosophy

Within and beyond music, discussions of creativity in the literature abound. While composition and improvisation in music education rely upon the creativity literature for justification, discussions of creativity extend beyond music education to the development of creative individuals in all areas of life. There are many distinct views of creativity and what makes an activity or product creative. Each of these views of creativity indicate ways that an individual can enrich aspects of their life or contribute to their profession and issues faced in the world.

The University of Chicago psychologist, Mihály Csikszentmihályi, explored different aspects of creativity in his 1996 book *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. In his book he seeks to discover, not only the process of creativity, but also what makes a person creative, and how that might differ from other views of creativity. Csikszentmihályi defines two different types of creativity: creativity with a small *c*, and Creativity with a large *C*. Creativity with a small *c* are the creativities of everyday life such as new baking recipes, or ideas in business, while Creativity with a large *C* are the innovations that change the domain of a specific culture in which the creativity occurs.

Several definitions of creativity exist in the literature. Similar to Csikszentmihályi, Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart (1999) define creativity as the ability to produce original or unexpected and useful work. Emma Policastro and Howard Gardner (1999) address creativity in terms of divergent thinking, where those individuals who are able to produce something relevant using unusual or divergent means are

creative. The differing ideas of unexpected, useful, and divergent activities/products to define creativity make creative people useful in a variety of contexts in life. The ability to be creative is a skill that potentially has an impact outside of the creative activity.

In their 2015 book, *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution that's Transforming Education*, Robinson and Aronica advocate for "a balanced curriculum (that) should give equal status and resources to the following: the arts, humanities, language arts, mathematics, physical education, and science" (p. 142). "(A)daptability to change and creativity in generating new ideas" (p. 19) are two skills that companies like IBM are prioritizing when hiring individuals; this is just one of the justifications that they cite to engage students in creative activities in school.

All of the differing views and studies of creativity agree that everyone has the capacity to be creative and that people are creative in everyday activities. Whether an individual is small *c* or large *C* creative within a specific domain, creative through production of original or unexpected work, or through divergent thinking all of these views of creativity enrich individuals of all walks of life and professions. Creative ability is one way that individuals can impact their profession or problems faced throughout the world.

Musical Creativity

The recent research on musical creativity focuses generally on two aspects: process or product. The literature on the process of musical creativity discusses creative musical tasks as either convergent or divergent, while the literature on musical creativity as a product focuses on the outcomes of the creative tasks and their value. Additionally, there are many tests that are used to evaluate the creativity of participants

of studies of musical creativity, including Guilford's Unusual Uses Test, the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), Webster's Measurement of Creative Thinking in Music, and the Vaughan Test of Musical Creativity (TMC).

The Process of Musical Creativity

Musical creativity is thought of in one of two ways: process or product (Biasutti, 2015, 2017; Hargreaves, 1999; Norgaard, 2017; Running, 2008; Webster, 1990). In Music Creativity research began focusing on improvisation and composition after its inclusion in the National Standards for Arts Education (Running, 2008). The process-focused creativity studies are largely focused on underlying cognitive activities (Hargreaves, 1999).

In his 2017 paper entitled "Teaching Improvisation through Processes. Applications in Music Education and Implications for General Education" Biasutti outlines a process-oriented approach to teaching improvisation where "the teacher is a facilitator for supporting the development of students' ideas" (p. 3). His approach to teaching jazz improvisation through cognitive processes includes five dimensions: 1. Anticipation, 2. Use of repertoire, 3. Emotive communication, 4. Feedback, and 5. Flow. "Anticipation" involves thinking about musical elements (melody, harmony, and rhythm) during the process of musical improvisation. "Use of Repertoire" is in reference to short musical motifs, or licks, during musical improvisation and is based on the study of other musician's improvisations and listening. "Emotive Communication" refers to the "musical grammar and stylistic principles" (p. 4) that are used to transmit emotional feelings during musical improvisations. "Feedback" are modifications to a musical improvisation in response to the group dynamics and context of the piece. Lastly, "Flow"

is a reference to the psychological research conducted by Csikzentmihályi, described in the previous section, where the improviser is in an intense state of consciousness during their improvisation.

Creativity has been classified as two differing views of thinking: divergent and convergent thinking (Webster, 1990). Convergent thinking tasks are designed to yield a single correct answer while divergent thinking tasks can produce several different possible answers. Generally, the process-oriented view of musical creativity examines divergent thinking tasks while convergent thinking tasks are examined through the product-oriented view of creativity. Kleinmintz, Goldstein, Mayseless, Abecasis, and Shamay-Tsoory (2014) believe that divergent thinking, the ability to produce multiple answers to a single problem, is the key to musical creativity. Their idea is that divergent thinkers will not only be able to solve a problem, but give multiple solutions to the same problem. Hargreaves (2012a) believes that the study of creativity should revolve around imagination. Creativity, in Hargreaves view, can generally be divided into four different domains: product, person, process, and place.

The results of a study by Sovansky, Wieth, Francis, and McIlhagga (2016) of musical expertise and engagement in the creation of music related to divergent thinking found that musicians who improvise, compose, and arrange music showed increased divergent thinking compared to musicians and non-musicians who do not engage in those creative musical activities. "The significant main effects for creation of music on fluency, flexibility, and originality, showing that any participants (regardless of how long they have been practicing music) who create music show more divergent thinking than those who do not create music" (Sovansky et al., 2016, p. 30). Expert musicians who do not

engage in creative musical activities, such as improvisation, composition, or arranging, were found to have a slight decrease in divergent thinking compared to novice and non-musicians. The authors thus concluded that within a domain some experts may be hindered by their expertise by experiencing more fixation.

Biasutti (2017) suggests that teachers take a scaffolded approach to teaching musical skills and to design a learning environment that includes “learning by doing, inductive, learning, critical thinking, and the development of creativity” (p. 6). This fostering of divergent thinking is meant to focus on quality processes rather than on the products for developing creative improvisers.

The Products of Musical Creativity

In contrast to the process of musical creativity is the value of musical creativity through the products that are produced by musicians (Coulson & Burke, 2013; Running, 2008). The product-oriented view of creativity often focuses on convergent thinking tasks. While Elliott (1995) focuses on the creative process through musical activities, such as composing and improvising, he does not consider the activities creative unless the final product has a substantial level of quality compared to other products within the scope of the sociocultural environment. This view holds the products of musically creative activities as the most important element of musical creativity.

Evaluation of Musical Creativity

Multiple creativity tests are frequently used in the evaluation of musical creativity. The most commonly used tests, including: the Guilford's Unusual Uses Test, the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), Webster's Measurement of Creative Thinking in Music, and the Vaughan Test of Musical Creativity (TMC). Each of these

tests of creativity have been used to evaluate pre- and/or post- the creativity of participants of musical creativity studies.

Guilford's Unusual Uses Test. Guilford's Unusual Uses Test evaluates the many uses for common household items that the participant answers and is scored based on four components: originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration. Originality is scored where each response is compared to the sum of all of the responses given by all of the people who took the test. Responses given by only 5% of the group are unusual, yielding one point, while responses given by only 1% of the group are unique, yielding two points – the points are then totaled and the higher scores indicate creativity (Guilford, 1967). Fluency is scored by the sum of all responses. Flexibility is the scored by the sum of different categories of uses for an item. Lastly, elaboration is scored based on the amount of detail used for the use of the item where the more detail is awarded the most points per answer (Guilford, 1967).

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking is found in two separate tests with two different forms each: the TTCT-Verbal (A and B) and the TTCT-Figural (A and B) (Kim, 2006). The TTCT-Verbal test “consists of five activities: ask-and-guess, product improvement, usual uses, unusual questions, and just suppose” (Kim, 2006, p. 3). The TTCT-Figural test “consists of three activities: picture construction, picture completion, and repeated figures of lines or circles” (Kim, 2006, p. 3). The tests are scored based on five mental characteristics: Fluency – “The number of relevant ideas; shows an ability to produce a number of figural images” (Kim 2006, p. 5); Originality – “The number of statistically infrequent ideas; shows an ability to produce uncommon or unique responses” (Kim, 2006, p. 5); Elaboration – “The number of added

ideas; demonstrates the subject's ability to develop and elaborate on ideas" (Kim, 2006, p. 5); Abstractness of Titles – "The degree beyond labeling; based on the idea that creativity requires an abstraction of thought" (Kim, 2006, p. 5); and Resistance to Premature Closure – "The degree of psychological openness; based on the belief that creative behavior requires a person to consider a variety of information when processing information and to keep an 'open mind'" (Kim, 2006, p. 5). This test is most often used to identify gifted learners.

Webster's Measurement of Creative Thinking. Webster's Measurement of Creative Thinking in Music consists of a series of ten tasks that are divided into three parts: exploration, application, and synthesis (Webster, 1994). The exploration section of the test allows children to become familiar with instruments and encourages their exploration of the musical elements: high/low, fast/slow, and loud/soft. As children explore these elements the way they manipulate them is one of the bases for scoring. The application section of the test requires more challenging tasks such as: a question and answer dialogue with mallets or temple blocks, the creation of a song on the piano and with their voice using a microphone. The synthesis section is the least structured and encourages the use of many instruments in the composition of a musical piece that contains a beginning, middle, and end (Webster, 1994). The final scoring is done using four factors: Musical Extensiveness – "the amount of clock time involved in the creative tasks" (Webster, 1994, p. 2); Musical Flexibility – "the extent to which the musical parameters of 'high'/'low' (pitch); 'fast'/'slow' (tempo) and 'loud'/'soft' (dynamics) are manipulated" (Webster, 1994, p. 3); Musical Originality – "the extent to which the response is unusual or unique in musical terms and in the manner of performance"

(Webster, 1994, p. 3); and Musical Syntax – “the extent to which the response is inherently logical and makes ‘musical sense’” (Webster, 1994, p. 3).

Vaughan Test of Musical Creativity (TMC). The Vaughan Test of Musical Creativity (TMC) contains six open-ended improvisational activities. In the first activity students are asked to play a steady beat on a drum while the test administrator “plays a duple rhythm on the claves” (Kiehn, 2003, p. 281); this first activity is not scored. In the second activity students must “create an answer rhythm on the drum (consequent phrase) to several four-measure phrase questions (antecedent)” (Kiehn, 2003, p. 281) performed by the test administrator. The third activity asks the students to improvise a drum rhythm while the test administrator performs a steady beat on the claves. The fourth activity includes the students creating a two-measure pentatonic melody on bells in response to a melody performed by the test administrator. The fifth activity “asks the student to improvise a tune on the white bells only” (Kiehn, 2003, p. 281) while the tester plays a C-G ostinato pattern. The sixth and final activity asks the student to create a piece “showing how she or he feels during a thunderstorm” (Kiehn, 2003, p. 281). The TMC uses a modified-scoring criteria from the original test that computes a “musical fluency subscore (determined by the number of different responses), musical originality subscore (uniqueness of response), and a composite score (sum of the two subscores)” (Kiehn, 2003, pp. 281-282).

Teaching Musical Improvisation

A major element of jazz music is improvisation. The rise of jazz education in American public school music programs has helped to promote improvisation within music education beginning in the 1950s. In many music programs the only instruction in

improvisation occurs within the jazz ensemble, while students who participate in music, but not in the jazz program, often receive no instruction in improvisation. Despite this, there are two general schools of thought on how improvisation might be facilitated or taught outside the jazz ensemble. The following section will discuss research in jazz improvisation, facilitating improvisation (free improvisation), and teaching improvisation.

Jazz Improvisation

There is a wealth of research in jazz studies related to improvisation (Hargreaves, 2012b; May, 2003; Ward-Steinman, 2008; Watson, 2010; West, 2015; Witmer & Robbins, 1988). Some of the more popular methods used to teach jazz improvisation are: Mehegan's *Tonal and Rhythmic Principles* (1959) and Russel's *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* (2001), which both focus on the use of modes for improvisation. Coker's (1964) method emphasizes motivic organization of the melody, and the Jamey Aebersold (1967) play-a-long series teaches a chord-scale system (using scales or arpeggios performed over chord changes) of improvisation (Witmer & Robbins, 1988).

A number of studies explored how to teach improvisation and the best method for jazz musicians to learn to improvise. Hargreaves (2012b) studied how jazz musicians generate musical ideas to determine the best way to approach to improvisation. He examined audiated improvisations and strategy/motor-generated, or chord-scale, improvisations (using scales or arpeggios performed over chord changes), and concluded that neither method was superior. West (2015) noted that, even within the jazz ensemble setting, there is not a proven model for teaching improvisation, and this is more evident

in ensembles at the middle school and elementary school level. He suggested that music educators explore peer teaching and mentoring and fostering environments of cooperative learning. These studies are found to be inconclusive as to a single method or approach that is superior to another in teaching and learning to improvise in the jazz idiom.

Another area of research in jazz education is achievement in improvisation. Ward-Steinman (2008) studied the achievement in improvisations of jazz vocalists and found that they scored highest in free improvisation and lowest in blues and rhythm changes. Watson's 2010 study found no statistical difference in the achievement of jazz improvisations of students who received aural versus notated instructional materials. Lastly, May (2003) and Watson (2010) noted self-efficacy as an important factor in jazz improvisation achievement, and also found that there was a gender gap between men and women in regards to self-efficacy in improvisation. Men were found to be more confident than women in their ability to improvise. Differing studies in jazz improvisation achievement have resulted in no difference between aural and notated instruction and noted that self-efficacy is an important factor in achievement.

Much of the research in jazz improvisation centers on self-efficacy in improvising, and the study and memorization of either arpeggio-scale patterns, or modes, or rhythmic and melodic patterns (licks) in different keys. This research is centered on the product or the method used to arrive at the product, but infrequently both. When teachers facilitate improvisation they are solely focused on the process of improvising and creating environments to encourage improvisation.

Improvisation Instruction Outside of the Jazz Ensemble

There is some debate whether improvisation can or should be taught, or if situations should be created to allow children to improvise (Hickey, 2009). While many musical traditions outside of Western art music are based on improvisation and are taught through systemic means, there are some that believe that improvisation cannot be taught, but rather should be experienced, most closely paralleling the free improvisation movement in the jazz idiom.

Facilitating Improvisation. The music of John Coltrane and other jazz musicians of his time made free improvisation famous. Peter Johnston (2013) examined the possible pedagogy of teaching free improvisation using the Jimmy Giuffre 3 jazz group as his example. Thoughts on the process the musicians go through during free improvisation sessions are found in the liner notes of the CD of *Free Fall* by the Jimmy Giuffre 3:

We spent as much time talking as playing at our rehearsals, asking questions as: How can we play at a given rate of speed, but without a fixed tempo? For how long is it possible to improvise without reference to a tonic pitch? What's the longest unbroken melody we can play? (Quoted in Johnston, 2013, p. 386)

In this way, the group developed its own system of practicing free ensemble improvisation.

While not specifically naming free improvisation, Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves (2009) concluded that children's early music making should be an effort to express themselves without any musical structures or rules to bind them. In this way, the teacher facilitates, rather than teaches improvisation. "The involvement of more intellectual skills and strategies" (p. 252) are necessary at more advanced stages of improvisation where improvisation goes from being process-oriented to product-oriented. Before reaching these more advanced stages of improvisation children need to be provided the

opportunity to gain a comfort in improvising and expressing themselves through different musical means.

Maud Hickey (2009) is one of the most well-known proponents of facilitating improvisation using a free improvisation style. Hickey proposes that students should be thrown into situations where they are required to improvise. In her view improvisation that is taught is not true improvisation. True improvisation is a disposition to be enabled and nurtured, and methodologies that use building blocks, such as tonal center, rhythmically simple, short, or uncontextualized patterns are more likely to hamper creative thought and the growth of creative musical thinkers. Hickey advocates for the critical examination of what improvisation means in the view of enculturation, teaching within the perspective of authentic improvisation practices. She believes that creative improvisation should be modeled and then a disposition should be encouraged and facilitated to allow for true creative improvisation.

Hickey believes that free improvisation should be facilitated in school music programs. Hickey defines free improvisation as “a form of improvisation that is ultimately the most open, non-rules bound, most learner directed,” and “begins with deep listening and reacting to the environment or players involved” (2009, p. 294). She calls this form of improvisation facilitating, because there is no direct teacher involvement, rather an environment is created that allows students to create whatever music they feel in the moment.

Teaching Improvisation. While free improvisation is often used as a way for young children to experiment with the sounds and timbres of their voice and new instruments, there is a history of teaching improvisation in school. The four leading

methodologies, Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff Schulwerk address improvisation in their differing approaches to teaching and learning music; but all believe that improvisation can be taught. Each individual methodology's approach to improvisation will be addressed later, but first I will discuss the pedagogical basis for teaching improvisation.

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development is one pedagogical basis for explicitly teaching improvisation. The zone of proximal development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). On their own, students can solve problems at their personal developmental level (which may or may not correspond to their chronological age), but if someone more knowledgeable (such as a teacher or peer) guides them in solving a particular problem, they may be able to solve problems at a much higher developmental level.

The zone of proximal development recognizes the developmental functions that are still developing and can be used by children with some outside guidance. Through the teacher's guidance and/or interaction with peers, who may be more advanced musically, students can increase their ability on a certain topic. For example, a child with limited improvisation ability could, with guidance from the teacher, maximize his/her musical creativity through improvisation. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development supports the idea that improvisation (in addition to other skills) can be learned with guidance and support.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is a pedagogical justification for teaching, or guiding students in, musical improvisation but there is still a need to find or develop methods to teach improvisation. There are numerous non-traditional and traditional methods for teaching improvisation and these will be discussed below.

Non-Traditional Methods of Teaching Improvisation. Recent research in non-traditional methods of music instruction, and in particular improvisation, is impacting the field of music education (Bartolome, 2011; Bitz, 1998; Campbell 1989; Davis, 2005; Musco, 2010). Folk and popular music are not only being taught in K-12 schools and institutions of higher education, but their approaches towards creating music are being incorporated into the traditional music curriculum.

Bartolome (2011) stressed the importance of listening, to present and perform world music authentically. Ghana, Cuba, Zimbabwe, and Trinidad are the musical cultures suggested by Bartolome as traditions that can be replicated easily on classroom instruments. She made further suggestions for listening and performing the styles of music from these cultures and how to encourage improvisation within the authentic musical styles. Listening to music, she concluded, was the best way to understand how to improvise in the musical language of other cultures.

Teaching students to improvise in the styles of Bluegrass, Reggae, Blues, Ska, Rap, Klezmer, and Rock are suggested by Bitz (1998). He outlined the melodic complexity, harmonic complexity, and tempo elements of each style of music that make them conducive to improvisation, along with suggested listening examples. His suggestion for classroom implementation was to (a) choose a genre, (b) research the

genre, (c) gather resources, (d) introduce the genre, (e) encourage group improvisation, and (f) let students explore.

Music can be created and notated without prior knowledge of music notation systems. Uptis (1990; 1992), while working with young children, encouraged them to create music and notate it using a system of their own creation. The importance of the notation is not to learn a specific system of notation, but rather to remember the music from one day to the next. Uptis acknowledged that there is merit to a common, unified notation system, but that teaching standard music notation often hampers student creativity. This has implications for improvisation as well – the ability to read a standard notation system is not necessary to improvise music.

Green (2002; 2008) suggested incorporating cooperative music making and composition through improvisation in a group setting. In her research she interviewed musicians who perform popular music about how they approach music and what informal methods they use to create music as a group. Learning by ear and experimentation with voices and instruments are the common themes across the popular musicians she interviewed. Listening to music was essential to the ability of individual musicians and groups as a whole to come to an agreement about the final musical product. In all forms of non-traditional methods of teaching improvisation there is a focus on listening to music and playing music by ear, not through notation.

Traditional Methods of Teaching Improvisation. While there is a rise in non-traditional methods of teaching improvisation, traditional methods of teaching improvisation are still present in music classrooms. Methods of teaching jazz improvisation and other traditional forms of improvisation pedagogy are being adapted to

all areas of music instruction. This section will address research on the different jazz and traditional methods of jazz improvisation to include: 1. beginning band instruction, 2. improvisation in jazz education, 3. traditional approaches to composition and improvisation in general music classrooms, and 4. characteristics and levels of improvisation achievement/readiness.

Azzara (1992; 1993) studied second year instrumental music students' ability to perform etudes, taught, practiced, and sight-read and the effect that improvisation instruction had on their achievement in those tasks. The study consisted of 66 fifth-grade instrumental students. Both the experimental and control groups used Student Book One and Home-Study Cassette from *Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series* (1990) by Grunow and Gordon. The groups received parallel instruction in skills and content with the exception of 10-15 minutes of improvisation activities during a 30-minute lesson for the experimental group. The data obtained in this research led to his conclusion that improvisation instruction improves the instrumental music performance achievement of elementary band students.

Azzara (1999), based on his previous research, suggested nine different activities to engage students in to facilitate their development as improvisers. These activities include (a) sing and play bass lines by ear; (b) play by ear rather than using notation; (c) chant rhythm patterns to better understand rhythms and meter; (d) sing tonal patterns that outline harmonic function to develop a better sense of harmonic progression; (e) learn solfege and rhythm syllables by ear; (f) "improvise rhythm patterns with and without rhythm syllables and tonal patterns with and without tonal syllables; (g) rhythm patterns to familiar bass lines; (h) rhythms on specific harmonic tones from particular harmonic

progressions” (p. 23); (i) create their own melodies; (j) “embellish a melody and its harmonic parts, countermelodies, chord tones, and bass lines” (p. 23); and (k) listening and learning to other improviser’s solos and thinking of an improvisation as a tune.

Azzara’s activities are structured to include listening and playing by ear, and then moving to notated music in a way that combines non-traditional and traditional methods.

Watson (2010) found significant evidence to support aural instruction in teaching for instrumental jazz improvisation. His study found a correlation between improvisation modeling, by the teacher, and students’ achievement in music and suggests that music educators incorporate aural imitation and listening to exemplary models of improvisation in their teaching. Aural imitation skill emerged as a predictor of vocal and instrumental jazz improvisation achievement.

Kratus (1989) studied the compositional processes used by children ages seven to eleven and found that the creative processes of the seven year olds was very similar to the act of improvisation, staying mostly in the exploration stage of composition. Given the time limitations of the study, Kratus suggested that, when teaching composition to younger children, they are given time to improvise, refine, and repeat their musical ideas. He suggested that improvisation activities occur before compositional activities. As the age increased with the children in this study so did their time in other stages of the compositional process – development, repetition, and silence (pg. 9).

Through his reading of literature on improvisation and his study discussed above, Kratus (1995) viewed a deficiency of an approach to teach improvisation that linked early musical explorations and intuition to more mature experienced musicians with more sophisticated improvisational skills. Kratus theorized developmental levels of

improvisation that share common characteristics. These common characteristics are (a) improvisations are purposeful movements to create musical sounds; (b) musical sounds made while improvising result in a musical product that is not possible to be revised in anyway as in composition; and (c) improvisations give the performer the freedom, within certain constraints, to choose pitches and rhythms. He created a model that describes seven developmental levels of improvisation in his 1995 study (a) exploration, (b) process-oriented improvisation, (c) product-oriented improvisation, (d) fluid improvisation, (e) structural improvisation, (f) stylistic improvisation, and (g) personal improvisation. He suggested that teachers can use these developmental levels as a model to engage students in improvisation.

From literature on cognition, Monk (2012) created what he called the five aspects of improvisational intelligences. Monk's five improvisational intelligences were (a) skilled performance of material, (b) creation of material, (c) continuation ideas, (d) structural awareness of the improvised work, and (e) temporal awareness of the improvised events. He treated each aspect of improvisation as a different way of thinking, that he referred to as a different brain. When teaching improvisation, teachers need to consider that each of these intelligences, or brains, are in different stages of development and may need to find ways, through specific improvisation activities, to stimulate each one separately.

In Burnard's 2002 study of the differences between improvisation and composition, children described their experience during improvisation as

'being on a roller-coaster,' and 'having no time to think' as a kind of pre-reflective impulse which felt like 'you had to dive,' 'play as you feel' or 'just follow your fingers.' The flow of the impulse seemed to rely upon relinquishing

the opportunity to stop, think, and plan but rather, to musically respond 'as it comes.' (p. 29)

Conversely, the children described the compositional processes as “‘finding,’ ‘focusing,’ and ‘fixing ideas,’ ‘putting it together,’ like ‘bits of a puzzle,’ ‘lots of play-throughs’ and ‘thinking back over ideas’” (p. 30). This distinction between improvising and composing is important for educators to understand so that they are able to teach and foster growth in both composing and improvising.

Studies of both traditional and non-traditional methods of teaching improvisation have shown that both of these broad approaches to teaching improvisation are successful in teaching children to improvise. Non-traditional methods of teaching improvisation focus on listening and playing by ear, while traditional methods of teaching improvisation emphasize more traditional music theory.

Learning to Teach Improvisation

Teachers must be able improvisers if they are to teach improvisation, but the lost skill of improvisation in Western art music extends to teacher training programs; where many pre-service teachers never receive training in teaching improvisation (Abramo & Reynolds, 2015; Brophy, 2002; Lee, 1999; Schmidt, 1989; Spurgeon, 2004). Most teacher training and methodological study related to teaching happen in one of two places: in pre-service (colleges and universities), or in in-service professional development (conferences, graduate programs, certification programs, etc.), the two areas are discussed below.

Pre-service Teacher Education

The traditional Western music education program focuses primarily on the performance practice, and the perfection of canonical literature. Hargreaves (1999) said

that many conservatory graduates were unable to compose or improvise on their instrument because of a lack of attention paid to improvisation in traditional music education programs. Most music educators were not trained as improvisers on their own instrument or in their music studies (Bernhard, 2012; Campbell, 2009). The research literature on improvisation in pre-service music education confirms this assertion.

Teachers' confidence in teaching improvisation has an effect on the depth, amount of knowledge, and experiences their students have in improvisation. Bernhard (2012) studied traditional 4-year Bachelor of Music in Music Education students' confidence in teaching the NAFME K-12 Achievement Standards (Music Educators National Conference, 1994) for improvisation and found that on average, their confidence in teaching improvisation decreased as the grade level of instruction increased. Teachers' lack of training in improvisation can negatively effect students' perceptions of music and, in particular, improvisation.

Scott (2007) concurred with Bernhard's 2012 study by recounting her own experiences performing improvisation on piano in her high school jazz band. She recalled feeling unprepared for the level of utter exposure that she felt when she shared music that came from within her. Not until she took Orff Schulwerk training, ten years after she graduated from high school, did she learn how to improvise (p. 6). She concluded that the best way to increase the confidence in the teacher to teach improvisation is to increase the course offerings that include instruction and experiences in improvisation.

Analyzing the course offerings for undergraduate music students can help identify strengths and deficiencies in music programs as it relates to improvisation instruction. Mishra, Day, Littles, and Vandewalker (2011) conducted a content analysis of

introductory courses in music education at 60, randomly selected, NASM-Accredited colleges and universities and found that there was little agreement on course content or credit hours. They also found that only about half of the institutions offered an introductory course specifically in music education, not to mention improvisation instruction for all, outside of a jazz program.

The inclusion of improvisation in state and national standards present more challenges to teachers who do not receive instruction in improvisation in pre-service as they struggle to comply with state and national guidelines. Byo (1999) studied classroom and music teachers' perceived ability to implement the National Standards for Music Education and found that they indicated the fewest resources available for teaching improvising and understanding music in relation to other subjects. The significance of this study, as it relates to this review of literature, is that the inconsistency of the content at colleges and universities directly impact pre-service teachers' experiences with creative aspects of music making such as composition and improvisation and their perceived ability to teach these standards to their students.

Della Pietra and Campbell (1995) found that collegiate music programs had strong emphasis in knowledge of performance, theory, and history, but only minimal attention to improvisation training. While there is frequent mention of improvisation in association with creativity in music, few students are trained in improvisation. Campbell (2009) concluded that improvisation is a vague and distant notion for most K-12 teachers who were not trained as improvising musicians, and that without firsthand experiences in the process of improvisation the pedagogical approaches are unclear. Without enough instruction and experiences in improvisation during pre-service teacher education

programs educators are left to find those missing experiences in in-service professional development opportunities.

In-Service Professional Development

While there seems to be a lack of training given to pre-service teachers at the university level, there are more numerous workshops and conferences for in-service teachers in improvisation. Gruenhagen and Whitcomb (2014) found 102 of the 114 responding teachers (90%) in their study had received training to teach improvisation at professional workshops or conferences. The primary professional development opportunities reported were teacher education courses and workshops in Orff Schulwerk, Dalcroze, Kodály, and Gordon Institute for Music Learning (GIML – Music Learning Theory).

The reporting of Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff Schulwerk as the primary sites of professional development in improvisation is significant as these organizations represent the primary general music methods utilized throughout the United States. Every general music methodology addresses improvisation differently and improvisation varies in its importance within each methodology. Gordon's Music Learning Theory, the Orff Schulwerk approach, and the Dalcroze method are cited most often as methods of teaching improvisation. The Kodály methodology addresses improvisation, but not to the degree of the previously mentioned methods, quite possibly because the Kodály method is an approach to music literacy and is often viewed as more prescribed than most of the other methods.

Orff Schulwerk

As described in Chapter I, the Orff Schulwerk approach was developed out of the gymnastics and dance movement education of Germany in the years following World War I. Orff believed that people begin to learn through physical activity and rhythmic sound and movement together; making music together with movement was essential to his approach. He attempted to approach all music in its most natural, organic way. The lessons, driven by improvisation, are done in a group to inspire and educate the students through a collaborative, active process of creating (Orff, 1978).

Improvisation is the centerpiece of instruction in the Orff Schulwerk approach to teaching music (DeStefano, 2006; Hamilton, 1998; Murray, 1989; Nichols, 1970; Orff, 1978; Solomon, 2000). Orff (1978) said that the starting point for all elemental music making is improvisation. Beginning with rhythmic improvisations as the foundation and stimulus for larger musical works. The notation of improvisations that were written, during the years of at the Günter-Schule and later in the volumes of *Music for Children*, were meant to show possibilities in elemental music and, specifically form, and to be used as a starting point for teachers to create music with their students. The musical examples in the volumes are to give inspiration for further exploration through teacher and student improvisations. Orff's focus on improvisation is explained further when he said "it is not a question of unusual talent but of children who have been awakened, for whom the elemental originality of the Schulwerk way of making music has released in them musical powers, that, if their musical education remains solely reproductive, stay buried" (1978, p. 218).

In the Orff Schulwerk classroom improvisation begins as musical play (DeStefano, 2006; Hamilton, 1998; Young, 2001). Improvisation is playing in music. In the beginning students explore their voice, movement, and instruments in the same way that toddlers explore their environment. Creating stories and roles, and imagining new places and situations are all forms of improvisation.

In Gunild Keetman's book *Elementaria: First Acquaintance with Orff-Schulwerk* (1974) she suggests that improvisation begins with short call and response activities between the teacher and individual student. "Rhythmic or melodic accompaniments, episodes with sound gestures or percussion instruments, also playing the melody alternately on recorder and barred instrument, add variety to the lesson" (Keetman, 1974, p. 95). With time, students grow to use all of the notes of a given scale and increasingly more complex musical forms with increasing skill.

Siemens (1969) compared 458 fifth grade students' "musical achievement as well as differences in interest, attitude, and success-feeling in musical participation" (p. 272). The students were divided into two groups: one group received traditional music instruction and the other received music instruction through the Orff approach. Siemens' study found that those students who were instructed using the Orff approach had a greater interest in music and a more positive attitude towards music. "Creative music activities received significantly more responses from the experimental group, as would be expected. The Orff instructional method stresses creativity, and these students' responses indicate that this creative activity is actually present to a greater extent" (p. 285). She also found that there were significant correlations of interest, to feelings of success, and attitude with the Knute Achievement and Kwalwasser-Ruch total scores in the Orff

group. Musical improvisation is usually performed in an environment that is exposed and a positive attitude and feeling of success help students feel comfortable taking risks while improvising.

Beegle (2010) studied the planned improvisations of 48 fifth-grade students for their improvisations and social interactions in response to three prompts: a poem, a painting, and a musical composition. She defined planned improvisation as, "a piece that is planned and practiced by performers in advance, but it may sound slightly different each time" (p. 221). Using the Orff Schulwerk approach, students were "instructed to work with their groups to improvise a 1-minute piece of music that related to the prompt and included repetition and contrast" (Beegle, 2010, p. 223) using one of the three artistic inspirations, over a 12-week period of instruction, roll assignments, exploration, run-throughs, and discussion and negotiation emerged as four common components all of the groups used during the planning process of their improvisations.

Beegle found that the music prompt provided the least freedom and the art prompt provided the most freedom of musical expression. For the poetry prompt "the text of the poem as chanted by the children and teacher provided an aural rhythmic structure for children's music improvisations" (Beegle, 2010, p. 228). The art prompt provided the most freedom because there was no aural material to base their improvisations. In stark contrast to the art prompt, the music prompt provided rhythms and timbres that were imitated or used as a catalyst for musical development. According to the children in this study, "the most important aspects of good improvisation performance included making wise representational instrumental choices and taking adequate time to prepare the performance so that it could be presented in a well-organized and synchronized fashion"

(p. 235). Beegle concluded that the key to inspiring children's creative musical growth was finding a balance between useful constraints and freedom of choice.

Orff Schulwerk Teacher Behaviors and Planning for Improvisation

The Orff Schulwerk empirical studies above address student learning through improvisation; however, none of those studies focus on the teacher's behaviors or the planning and teaching of lesson plans that include improvisation. While there is very little empirical research on the planning and teaching of improvisation by Orff Schulwerk teachers, there are many pedagogical articles that discuss these concepts (Brophy, 2001; Burnard, 2002; Carley, 1975; DeStefano, 2006; Gagné, 2001; Hamilton, 2000; Kenney, 1973; Murray, 1989; Solomon, 2000; Stamou, 2001; Van Gunten, 2000; Young, 2001).

Pedagogical Articles

A major source of articles about Orff Schulwerk for Orff Schulwerk teachers is the AOSA publication *The Orff Echo*. *The Orff Echo* is published quarterly and contains articles about current developments in education, lesson plans and procedure sharing, historically significant events in the Orff Schulwerk movement, contemporary applications of Orff Schulwerk, portraits of visionaries of the Orff Schulwerk movement, and research articles about Orff Schulwerk. While *The Orff Echo* is peer-reviewed, it lacks the notoriety of other research journals in music education. This section will discuss articles from *The Orff Echo* that specifically address improvisation.

Carl Orff believed that a child's first experience in music was through movement. Danai Gagné (2001) described how her students instinctively began to move or dance anytime she played a drum. She explained that material for drumming that provides inspiration for movement and dance can be found in the Orff Schulwerk volumes,

especially volumes I and V. "A long-drawn arm, leg, or body movement can suggest a smooth, legato-like sound quality to the drummer. The quality of movement may also evoke a specific tone color in drumming" (p. 12). Drumming can become an inspiration for dance improvisation and vice-versa.

Rhythmic improvisation is often cited as a starting point for early improvisers. Murray (1989), who is known for her English translations of the *Music for Children* volumes, suggests a three-part framework for improvisation. Prior to student improvisation, she suggests lots of practice with students echoing the rhythms of the teacher in preparation for improvisation. The basic structure for improvisation that Murray suggests is (a) "start with a rhythm," (b) "decide how you will perform your rhythm," and (c) "create an A-B-A (ternary) form" (p. 33). The A section would represent the rhythm and the B section would be a question and answer improvisation with the teacher playing the question and a student playing an answer.

As noted in studies above, one necessity in fostering musical improvisation in children is giving them time to explore and practice their improvisations. Hamilton (2000) suggested that music teachers try to cover too much material and that spending more time on a concept or piece will allow students deeper understanding of musical concepts. He suggested that students will have a better understanding of musical concepts the more time you allow them to manipulate the musical material through composition and improvisation.

A music classroom that is structured to invite students to play with possibilities of musical elements is what Young (2001) suggested. This is accomplished by including open-ended elements that necessitate the use of improvisation. Young suggested that

students need the following skills to improvise with good musicianship (a) recognize and sing with a good tone, (b) understand high and low pitches, (c) express thoughts and ideas with a singing tone, (d) performing music in a steady beat with rhythmic competency and recognizing differing meters and rhythmic patterns, and (e) proper use of timbre, articulation, tempo, and tonality to express themselves musically (2001, p. 16). These skills, in addition to lots of opportunities to practice, will help students develop into more competent improvisers.

“The difficulty for the music teacher is to balance the development of artistic perception, by which I mean acquisition of skills and knowledge, with creative expression, thus leaving the student free to use the language of music to ‘speak’ from the heart” (Van Gunten, 2000, p. 9). Van Gunten believes that improvisation is the means to allow students a balance between creative expression and the development of artistic perception. The use of musical elements within student improvisations offers the teacher a more authentic assessment of their students’ knowledge of musical concepts.

Stamou (2001) suggests that improvisation should not exist as an activity in the music class, but rather the spirit of improvisation should be infused in the class by “creating a child-centered environment, providing stimulation for children’s imaginations, formulating musical problems that need to be solved, and encouraging spontaneity and uninhibited expression of musical ideas” (p. 10). The stimulation of children’s imaginations and encouragement of spontaneous musical expression is the essence of Orff Schulwerk that are found through the writings of Gunild Keetman and Carl Orff, in his reference to the humus. Using defined improvisational parameters, the

Orff Schulwerk approach to improvisation is one of facilitation rather than direct instruction.

Empirical Studies

Amy Beegle conducted the only empirical study that was identified on Orff Schulwerk teachers' behaviors and planning to encourage improvisation by the students. Beegle (2001) identified teacher behaviors of general music teachers while planning and teaching lessons that include improvisation as an area that has very little research (p. 2). Her study examined the use of improvisation by three Orff-trained elementary music teachers in elementary schools. The focus was on the teachers' interpretations of improvisational processes and the outcome for their students. At the time of the study, each teacher had varying levels of Orff training and experience. All three teachers attested to the importance of including improvisation in their classes, but only one teacher believed that the improvisation skills learned in the music classroom could apply to all areas of life.

Each of the three teachers utilized different strategies for engaging students in improvisation activities. The teachers were each observed using different levels of restrictive activities that allowed students to focus on a particular aspect of music (i.e. rhythm, melody, or both at the same time) based on their students' experience and ability levels. The differing levels of restriction allowed the teachers to focus and evaluate specific musical skills or students to synthesize, through manipulation, different musical concepts. The less restrictive the guidelines were for improvisation, the more opportunity the students had for originality in their improvisations.

These teachers in Beegle's study used varying materials to engage students in improvisation, that consisted of (a) the five volumes of *Music for Children* written by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, (b) folk songs, and (c) songs with Orff arrangements arranged by the teacher or other Orff educators. These varying materials served as models for student improvisations. Teachers chose these pieces carefully to ensure that students were able to manipulate the music within the guidelines set by the teacher.

Beegle's (2001) study shows that these Orff Schulwerk teachers carefully planned opportunities for student improvisation at the appropriate level for their ability, which support Kratus' theory of levels of improvisation. The varied levels of restrictive guidelines for improvisation allowed students to focus on the amount of musical manipulation that was appropriate for their ability and as they became more proficient in manipulating music they received fewer musical restrictions. This study is important because there is very little research on the planning, materials, and teacher behaviors as it relates to teaching or facilitating student improvisation in the general music classroom.

The study of Orff Schulwerk teachers' planning, materials, and teaching strategies that encourage improvisation by their students in their classroom has a direct impact on the practicing Orff Schulwerk music teacher and the broader music education community. The present study will explore all of the aspects of Beegle's study with a larger number of participants, a total of six participants versus three in Beegle's study, and with a focus on expert Orff Schulwerk practitioners recognized by AOSA as teacher educators who teach the AOSA-sanctioned leveled courses of Orff Schulwerk certification.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed the historical background of improvisation in music, creativity philosophy as it relates to improvisation, jazz education, teaching versus facilitating improvisation, non-traditional and traditional methods of teaching improvisation, teacher preparedness to teach improvisation (pre-service and in-service), differing methodological approaches to teaching general music and how they address musical improvisation, and pedagogical articles and empirical studies in teaching improvisation using the Orff Schulwerk approach. From this literature, I have concluded that improvisation is a valid approach to musical learning and that the Orff Schulwerk approach to music education is one that centers on improvisation and is accessible to teachers and students alike. In particular, the materials and practices used by Orff Schulwerk teachers to teach and engage students in improvisational activities is an area that needs further research and will be addressed in this study.

Chapter III: Method

The purpose of this qualitative multi-site case study is to evaluate the materials and methods used by Orff Schulwerk teachers to teach their upper elementary school students to improvise and/or situations they create to encourage student improvisation in general music class. This study focused on the planning, materials, and teaching techniques of the teacher.

The three research questions that drive this study were

1. How is improvisation presented/taught/fostered/integrated in the upper elementary school general music classroom by expert Orff Schulwerk teachers?
2. What specific materials (books and other resources) do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers use to teach or foster improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms?
3. Do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers change their improvisation instruction based on the developmental level of the improviser?

Study Design

While there are different approaches to conducting case study research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017), this dissertation was a multi-case instrumental study aligned with the case study methodology outlined by Stake (1995). This was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) because, while it focuses primarily on the particular practices of individual AOSA certified teacher-educators, the primary goal is to understand the teaching of improvisation by these individuals as a group. While “the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization” (Stake, 1995, p. 8), the participants in this study were expert Orff Schulwerk teachers that are certified by the AOSA to teach certification

levels for the AOSA and have significant influence on a large number of teachers that use the Orff approach. Understanding what these teacher-educators do individually and collectively is an important contribution to the literature on teaching musical improvisation.

Participant Selection

The participants of this study were expert Orff Schulwerk teachers. Expert Orff Schulwerk teachers were defined in this study as AOSA certified teacher-educators, the teachers certified to teach the Orff Schulwerk certification courses to other music teachers. Stake suggests that the researcher have a “connoisseur’s [sic] appetite” (p. 56) for the best sources of data to understand the case and that is the reason why only AOSA certified teacher-educators were selected for this case study. A convenience sampling was used because there were an adequate, and diverse group of potential participants within a reasonable driving distance. The list of AOSA Teacher Educators, found on the AOSA website, was curtailed to those living within the regions between Boston, MA and Northern Virginia (north to south) and New Jersey to Eastern Ohio (east to west). This reduced list was then reviewed by an AOSA executive board member who provided details regarding those who had retired or were no longer teaching and who also recommended teachers appropriate to the study. The names from this list were then put into a randomized generator, <https://www.random.org/lists>, and 15 names were selected for potential participation in this study.

The ultimate goal was to select four to six participants who would serve as the primary participants in this study. The fifteen teachers randomly selected as described above were invited to participate in a screening interview using the email request

(Appendix A). Teachers completed the interview consent form (Appendix B) before the screening interview. The screening interview was conducted via Skype or Google Hangout, utilizing the protocol in Appendix C, and lasted approximately 45 minutes for each participant. Six teachers were invited, via email, to participate in a second interview (Appendix D), classroom observations, and a follow-up interview. The selection of the final participants was determined by their use of improvisation in their classroom, the rapport established between the participant and the researcher, and the participant's willingness to participate in this study. The selection decision was not made based on race, gender, class, or any other demographic characteristic.

Data Collection

The primary sources of data in this study were semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Qualitative data was collected in the form of recorded interviews, which were transcribed, including a screening interview, second interview, and classroom observations. Some teachers also provided curriculum documents, lesson plans, and other instructional materials for review by the researcher.

The 8 screening interviews took place via Skype, Google Hangout, or in person and were recorded using a Zoom H1 digital recorder. General questions about the teacher, his/her teaching experience, teaching assignment, school, experience with Orff Schulwerk, and use of improvisation with their upper elementary school students took place in the screening interview. These initial interviews were then transcribed within 24 hours, to minimize the threat to internal validity by history as suggested by Creswell (2014, p. 174).

Six teachers were invited to participate in the study further, which included another interview, either in person, via Skype, or Google Hangout, and recorded using a Zoom H1 digital recorder (interview consent form in Appendix E). This second interview consisted of more in depth questions about the teacher's experience improvising, the importance of improvisation in their classroom, and the importance of improvisation in using the Orff approach (protocol, Appendix F). These interviews were transcribed within twenty-four hours and shared with the subject for the purpose of member checking and clarification of any of the items in the interview.

In addition, the researcher observed the teachers teaching their upper elementary school classes. The Rutgers IRB asked that administrative approval for site visits be given before they took place. A template of this letter is in Appendix G and was personalized for each site once the participants were selected. Stake suggests making observations that are pertinent to the issues of the case that help reach a "greater understanding of the case" (1995, p. 60). Since elementary general music schedules vary from school district to school district – some have classes every other day, twice a week, once a week, and others on a rotating schedule with less frequent class meetings, I observed a minimum of two different upper elementary grades (grades 3-6) and a minimum of six class periods of music classes (this included some repeated lessons of the same grade with a different class of students). The goal of the classroom visits was, through direct observation of teaching improvisation in the classroom, to observe the use of materials and methods present in the teachers' practice. The protocol that was used to collect the data can be found in Appendix H. My role during the classroom observations was that of a complete observer, in other words, I did not participate in the lesson

activities while observing (Creswell, 2014). In order to observe the teacher in his/her most authentic teaching environment, I served as a noninterventionist observer (Stake, 1995, p. 44).

Qualitative data was collected in the form of recorded interviews, that were transcribed, and the field notes and researcher narratives written during or immediately following classroom observations. In addition, the principal investigator wrote a narrative of each day's site visit, to include a description of the school and classroom environment, immediately upon leaving the field. Some of the teachers also provided curriculum documents, lesson plans, and other instructional materials which completed the data set.

Trustworthiness

Data source triangulation was accomplished through the comparison of interviews, observations (in some cases the same lesson with more than one class), and other curricular materials and lesson plans. This allowed the investigator to "see if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently" (Stake, 1995, p. 112). Whether or not lessons were repeated were case specific and varied based on the teaching schedule of the teacher.

In addition to interviews and site visits, the principal investigator wrote thick descriptive narrations of each site visit that included a description of the school and classroom environment. These descriptive narratives were intended to evoke the feeling of the school and learning environment. Thick descriptions were used as a form of data and are used as part of the final presentation of data.

Member checking occurred in order to check accuracy, validity, and points of clarification. Each participant was asked to review the transcript of his/her second

interview and make corrections or additions where necessary. Each participant was also asked to review an early draft of his/her narrative of the site visit. These points of member checking serve to validate the data collected and the analysis conducted.

To avoid threats to the data related to time, all data was collected within a two-month time period. Interviews and classroom observations occurred within a month of each other, dependent on the teaching schedule of the teacher. Interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of the interview to ensure there was no threat of internal validity through “history” (Creswell, 2014, p. 174). Observations were conducted within 30 days of the second interview to ensure there was no threat of internal validity through “maturation” (Creswell, 2014, p. 174).

Researcher Bias

I am an Orff Schulwerk certified teacher and use this approach in my own teaching of upper elementary school students. I also teach improvisation at every grade level and believe that improvisation can and should be taught to all children. I also believe that the teacher should meet the students at the level at which they are currently able to improvise and create situations for them to develop their improvisational skills in a controlled environment that allows them to be successful. Given these beliefs, I come to this study and the topic of improvisation through Orff Schulwerk as an insider. However, I am an outsider to the participants selected for this study and their school communities. As I move through this study I remained aware of how my beliefs and experiences may color my interactions and observations of the participants. These thoughts and beliefs have potential to show through in my observation notes and reflections, knowing this I

reviewed my notes and highlighted anything that may be a “feeling” in the observations or reflections prior to analysis.

Confidentiality

Each participant received a letter explaining the study (Appendix A). The participants also received the consent form (Appendix B) and were given the opportunity to ask questions they had. Signed consent forms were collected prior to the screening interview. Participants selected to continue with the study were also given a consent form prior to the second interview (Appendix E). As required by IRB, each school site received a consent letter to sign and return prior to the site visit (Appendix H).

To maintain confidentiality during data collection and to minimize subject risk, I personally transcribed the audio recordings from interviews, and stored the transcriptions on a password-protected flash drive. Personal information and audio recordings were stored separately on a password-protected flash drive and destroyed immediately after completion of the study procedures.

During classroom observations, I sat in a convenient and unobtrusive position in the classroom. My role was that of the complete observer, free of intervention or interruption, presenting no additional risk than is normally present in an unobserved class. While some teacher-to-student interactions were observed, the focus is on the teacher and at no time were students identified during this study.

Confidentiality was safeguarded during the data collection by replacing actual teachers' names and names of their schools with pseudonyms – each of the teachers choose their own and school pseudonyms. The geographic location of the school was

generalized by region. The Rutgers University Institutional Review Board has approved this study (Appendix I).

Analysis

Analysis of data collected from interviews, site visits, and field notes took place through “direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class” (Stake, 1995, p. 74). Direct interpretation of individual instances is a narrative about what happened in a specific time and place. Aggregation of instances is an analysis of multiple instances that can be made to draw more generalized conclusions. These two levels of analysis provide answers to the research questions:

1. How is improvisation presented/taught/fostered/integrated in the upper elementary school general music classroom by expert Orff Schulwerk teachers?
2. What specific materials (books and other resources) do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers use to teach or foster improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms?
3. Do expert Orff Schulwerk teachers change their improvisation instruction based on the developmental level of the improviser?

Initial analysis was conducted within each individual case. To address the three research questions, a priori themes include (a) teacher language and actions to encourage and direct student improvisations, (b) teacher language and actions that foster an atmosphere conducive to improvisation, (c) materials used to teach or encourage improvisation, (d) how teachers meet and support students based on student improvisation abilities. In addition, analysis of each case included thematic coding

focused on the background and experience of the teacher. Not all themes and codes were able to be identified at the outset of the study and thus additional emergent codes for themes or subthemes were used as necessary. The themes that emerged in each case were analyzed for content and agreement between interview data collected from the respondent and observations of the respondent in practice.

The second stage of analysis included cross-case analysis. Thematic codes from individual participants were aggregated and differences and similarities were found (Stake, 1995, p. 74). Given that this is an instrumental case study, conclusions from the cross-case analysis focused on the similarities and differences across cases particularly in relation to the three research questions. The cross-case themes were analyzed using a combined/modified version of Stake's (2006) Worksheets 2 and 4, which were used to evaluate the frequency of all of the instructional themes, materials used, and differentiation strategies. All of the themes were entered with their occurrences found during the site visits and interviews were aggregated into the table, see Appendix J. The final results are presented with brief introductions to each participant and scenes of improvisation for each participant, followed by thematic results found across all of the participants of the study.

Chapter IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the materials and methods used by Orff Schulwerk teachers to teach their upper elementary school students to improvise in general music class. While the six teachers in this study are similar, because they are all AOSA-certified teacher-educators, they are diverse in their teaching assignments and school climates, ranging from a wealthy independent school to a modern rural school to a Title 1 inner city school. This chapter examines both the within- and cross-case themes identified during the course of the study.

Before the presentation of the within- and cross-case themes it is important to know the philosophical viewpoint of each of the teachers as it relates to three questions in the second interview (Appendix F): 1. How would you define improvisation? 2. What, in your view, is the purpose of improvisation? and 3. In your opinion, how important is improvisation in Orff Schulwerk? Selections from the participant's answers to these questions are found in Table 4.1. All statements listed in the table are direct quotes from the named participant. The names of the teachers, schools, and students are pseudonyms selected by either the teacher-participants or the primary investigator.

Table 4.1

Second Interview Questions and Answers about Improvisation

How would you define improvisation?	
Mr. Braun	Creating within a given structure.
Mrs. Tommie	Instantaneous creation of music, but done within a structure.
Mr. Andrews	Making up music on the spot. Probably with some sort of rudimentary plan.
Mr. Gonzalez	Making it up as we go with a couple of standards and knowledge points in place that help guide us.
Mrs. Beasley	Creating music on the spot within a given structure.
Mr. Parris	Music made in the moment within a set of guidelines, but there are set parameters.
What, in your view, is the purpose of improvisation?	
Mr. Braun	An opportunity for someone to create an opportunity for themselves to be spontaneous and playful with the possibilities that they are experienced in generating in a planned way, and refocusing them in a very spontaneous way that doesn't necessarily involve fore-thought.
Mrs. Tommie	There's two answers to that question: the standards-based reason and the humanity reason. The students are really applying and showing their understanding of the concept and able to apply it in a musical context is a much higher musicianship skill and I think there's more nuances that start to layer on.
Mr. Andrews	Improvisation is to music, as calisthenics is to the body. It's a critical part of so very many genres and styles of music around the world, that to let those muscles atrophy does a disservice in real-world music making.
Mr. Gonzalez	It's a higher level thinking skill above exploration. Improvisation takes that exploration and puts up to a considerably higher level, because the goal is for students to also keep track of both the fact that they're making something up in one aspect of what's going on in their brain.

Mrs. Beasley	<p>It allows kids to play with musical elements that they're working on.</p> <p>It allows them to discover what they like and do not like about certain ways to make music.</p> <p>It allows them to have the freedom to just explore their own musicality.</p> <p>It allows them to take a concept that they've already mastered, or a concept that they're working with and it allows them to play with it and really use it.</p> <p>To take that idea and use it for their own creation.</p>
Mr. Parris	<p>I want them to be more fluid musically and I think that improvisation helps.</p>

In your opinion, how important is improvisation in Orff Schulwerk?

Mr. Braun	<p>If you're able to have the students for an unlimited amount of time and lead them at their own pace then improvisation should be the guiding light, the second binary force to the idea of introduction and exposition of concepts, reinforcement of concepts, all of that should be experienced in the process and through the process, going between a didactic and evocative teaching style.</p> <p>For me improvisation is important as a way of experimenting and exploring with students, however, when the curriculum is too far beyond what skills they're able to refine then the improvisation becomes detrimental to the learning because it creates a negative experience with the newer concepts.</p>
Mrs. Tommie	<p>The whole model is meant to be improvisatory, and I think the danger happened when the improvisations, as models, got stuck on a page in a book. That the approach has been misinterpreted because of that. What are on the pages at the beginnings were improvisation examples, they were never meant to be replicated.</p> <p>The vision from the get-go was bigger than just music and movement, so it was about people.</p>
Mr. Andrews	<p>Critical. Without it it's not the Orff Schulwerk. Without improvisation you can't have composition. Without composition it's not Orff Schulwerk. Sing, say, move, play, and create are the five tenants, and for some reason a lot of people leave out the "create," which I just don't understand.</p> <p>Some people are like - sing, say, move, play. Yeah, that's great, but if you as a teacher are being all like band teachery and telling them - do this exactly when I tell you, exactly in the way I tell you, then when I tell you to shut up, shut up. That's not Orff Schulwerk. That's completely missing the point.</p>
Mr. Gonzalez	<p>Very important. I spend most of my time in the classroom on exploration and improvisation.</p>
Mrs. Beasley	<p>I think it's one of the cornerstones of it, because part of what Orff Schulwerk is all about is taking what you have inside of you as a child and bringing that out to be part of the whole.</p> <p>And not just impose on them someone else's musical experience or someone else's musical ideas - it's about learning other musical ideas and elemental piece and then putting them together in</p>

different ways to create new things.

Mr. Parris

If a teacher's not willing to explore improvisation they don't truly have an understanding of the Schulwerk. To me the Schulwerk, above and beyond anything else, the Schulwerk is an approach that values student creativity and is all about giving students the tools they need to be creative thinkers.

Within-Case Findings

This section begins with an introduction to each teacher and a rich description of two scenes of improvisation in each classroom. This is followed by an analysis of a priori and emergent themes related to the research questions. All quotations were taken from site visit observation field notes unless otherwise noted. A brief background of each teacher is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Brief backgrounds of the teachers.

Names	School Description	Grade Levels	Years Teaching	Ensembles taught beyond general music classes
Mr. Braun	Rural Title 1 Public School	K-6	17	5 th and 6 th Grade Chorus
Mrs. Tommie	Suburban Title 1 Public School	4-6	22	5 th and 6 th Grade Chorus; 5 th Grade Orff Ensemble
Mr. Andrews	Suburban Private School	4-6	12	6 th Grade Chorus
Mr. Gonzalez	Urban Public School	K-5	8	4 th and 5 th Chorus; 4 th and 5 th Grade Recorder/Orff Ensemble
Mrs. Beasley	Urban Title 1 Public School	PreK-5	15	4 th Grade Recorder Ensemble; 5 th Grade Recorder Consort; 3 rd -5 th Grade Chorus; Ukulele Club; Guitar Club; 3 rd -5 th Grade Orff Ensemble
Mr. Parris	Suburban Public School	K-5	21	4 th and 5 th Grade Chorus; Hand Chime Choir

Mr. Braun

Mr. Braun has been teaching general music and chorus at Pleasant Hills Elementary School for 16 years. A professor possessing Orff Schulwerk certification who taught Mr. Braun's Elementary General Music Methods Course introduced him to the Orff approach during his undergraduate education. Using the Orff approach his entire teaching career, Mr. Braun was drawn to Orff Schulwerk because of its approach of "active music making instead of learning about music" (interview, 10/24/17). "[C]reativity and opportunities for students to use their own ideas and imaginations to create, and the emphasis on improvisation to become fully immersed in the media for creativity" (interview, 10/24/17) were other reasons for Mr. Braun's attraction to the Orff approach.

Improvisation begins in Kindergarten in Mr. Braun's classes, "the improvisations that younger students do are very small [and] incrementally increase as the grade levels go up" (interview, 10/24/17). As an example of the differing levels of improvisation: "first grade is perhaps just filling in one word of a rhyme with their own creative idea, then through sixth grade they're improvising over shifting borduns or trying their hand at a 12-bar blues progression in the more advanced stages" (interview, 10/24/17). Mr. Braun defined improvisation as "creating within a given structure, with a set understanding of some basic ground-rules and expectations," he continued by saying "it's spontaneous creation of musical content that comes about as a result of what skills and abilities you have that you are manifesting in real-time" (interview, 1/31/18).

Mr. Braun believes that the purpose of improvisation is giving, or creating, the opportunity to play with the possibilities of specific musical elements, which he defined

as “structured play” (interview, 1/31/18). He equated improvisation in music to learning to speak a language:

the conception of the idea comes from experiencing and imitating and responding to other musical stimuli and eventually the creative aspect of a learner puts those together in ways that are novel for themselves and then that's the production of their own creative idea and by virtue of a musician creating their own (interview, 1/31/18)

The creativity that Mr. Braun seeks to draw from his students in improvisation go beyond the traditional thinking of rhythmic or melodic improvisation. Contributing their individual ideas into the class, Mr. Braun tries to give up control of activities by making the students “feel like a creative partner” (interview, 1/31/18) in music-making.

Pleasant Hills Elementary School. Nestled in a small rural town along rolling hills and open farmlands is the 500-student Pleasant Hills Elementary School. Pleasant Hills Elementary is a Kindergarten through Sixth Grade elementary school whose demographics are 80.6% Caucasian (not Hispanic), 9.2% Hispanic, 4.4% Multi-Racial (not Hispanic), 3.8 % Asian, 1.6% Black or African American, and 0.4% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander according to a state performance website. The school is also designated as Title I with 29% of the student body receiving free or reduced lunch. As I exited the highway, passing a horse and buggy, I approached the main road that led to the town center, consisting of three or four blocks. The homes and shops on the main road are a mix of new construction mixed with older buildings dating back to the 1800s.

According to Mr. Braun a school existed on this site since the mid-1800s; the current building was remodeled in 1991. The school was located on a residential street adjacent to a firehouse, and the spacious music room is in the back corner of the building next to the art room and across the hall from a large gymnasium. The school features very

clean tile floors and a modern sensibility. A tan carpet covered approximately half of the tiled floor in the large open room. Instruments lined the walls, including a class set of xylophones, metallophones, and ukuleles, framed hand and tubano drums, as well as an assortment of untuned percussion instruments, and a small library of children's picture books. Additionally, the walls were filled with posters of recorder fingerings, Curwen hand signs, and movement inspiring words.

From the signs and posters on the wall to the low-level stored instruments, everything in the room was purposefully placed and positioned in a fashion that allows students to easily access materials. Each morning a few sixth grade students come to the music room, as they arrive at school, to tune all of the ukuleles in the classroom. Mr. Braun and the students joked with each other, carried on conversations about their weekend and events outside of school, ending with the students taking a piece of candy from a cabinet above the sink as gratitude for their work.

The school schedule allows Mr. Braun to see each of his classes for 45 minutes every four school days. Mr. Braun is not required to write or submit lesson plans, but he maintains an outline of activities for each of his classes.

Scenes of Improvisation. Mr. Braun and his Third through Sixth Grade music classes engaged in varied improvisation activities during my two-day visit. The improvisational activities that I observed fell into three categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisations, 2. Melodic improvisations, and 3. Movement improvisations, (Table 4.3). In the following sections I will describe two scenes of improvisation activities that Mr. Braun and his students engaged in over those two days. The first scene follows a Third Grade Class in their use of chaining words together to create rhythms for a rhythmic

improvisation, and the second scene follows a Sixth Grade Class whose melodic improvisations were inspired by a painting.

Table 4.3

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mr. Braun's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
4-beat body percussion	4 th grade class performed a rhythm echo, beginning with clapping and echoing the teacher, leading to their own rhythms and more body percussion levels.
Word-chaining	3 rd grade class improvised rhythmically through word-chaining, where the words "cat," "monkey," and "alligator" represented quarter notes, two eighth notes, and four sixteenth notes respectively.
Recitative to untuned percussion	5 th grade class improvised a recitative about their morning routine.
Untuned percussion improvisation inspired by movement	5 th grade class improvised on untuned percussion instruments to represent movements made to represent their recitatives.
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Recorder improvisation	4 th grade class performed melodic improvisations using the notes G and E and the rhythms quarter notes, two eighth notes, and four sixteenth notes.
Melodic improvisation with targeted phrase endings	6 th grade class performed melodic improvisation in two eight-beat phrases with the note E ending the first phrase and the note A ending the second phrase. Rhythmic variance and tonal choices (G, A, C, D, and E) were expanded sequentially as the students improvised.
Inspired by a painting	6 th grade class used an element of a painting as inspiration for their melodic improvisation on barred percussion instruments.
<i>Movement Improvisation</i>	
Shadow improvisation	3 rd grade class performed shadow movement improvisations where half of the class moved freely to music, provided by the teacher, and the other half of the class shadowed their movements.
Inspire by a painting	6 th grade class used an element of a painting as inspiration for movement improvisation.
Inspired by recitative improvisation	5 th grade class improvised movements to represent their recitatives.

Scene 1: Word-chaining improvisation. Prior to my visit, Mr. Braun's Third Grade classes learned the piece "Ding Dong Diggigdigong" from *Music for Children Volume I: Pentatonic* (Orff & Keetman, 1958); during my visit this piece was used to teach the rhythm four-sixteenth notes. The class begins by singing the song using solfege

syllables with simplified rhythms, substituting eighth note and sixteenth note rhythms with quarter notes. As Mr. Braun moves towards the cabinets to the right of the room, he tells the class that they are welcoming a new class pet and reveals an alligator hand puppet. The class says the word “alligator” each time Mr. Braun holds the puppet in the air above his head; he otherwise he conceals it behind his back. Using solfege syllables, the class sings the song again but adds the sections of sixteenth notes. Instead of singing the solfege syllables for the pitches of the sixteenth notes the class sings the word “alligator” as Mr. Braun holds the puppet above his head.

The class moves towards the Promethean Board, which hangs in the front of the room adjacent to Mr. Braun’s desk, where an image of boxes four by four is projected, (Figure 4.1). The left side of the board projects the rhythms quarter note, two-eighth notes, and four-sixteenth notes. Mr. Braun asks the class to suggest one-syllable animals to represent the quarter note; they choose “cat.”

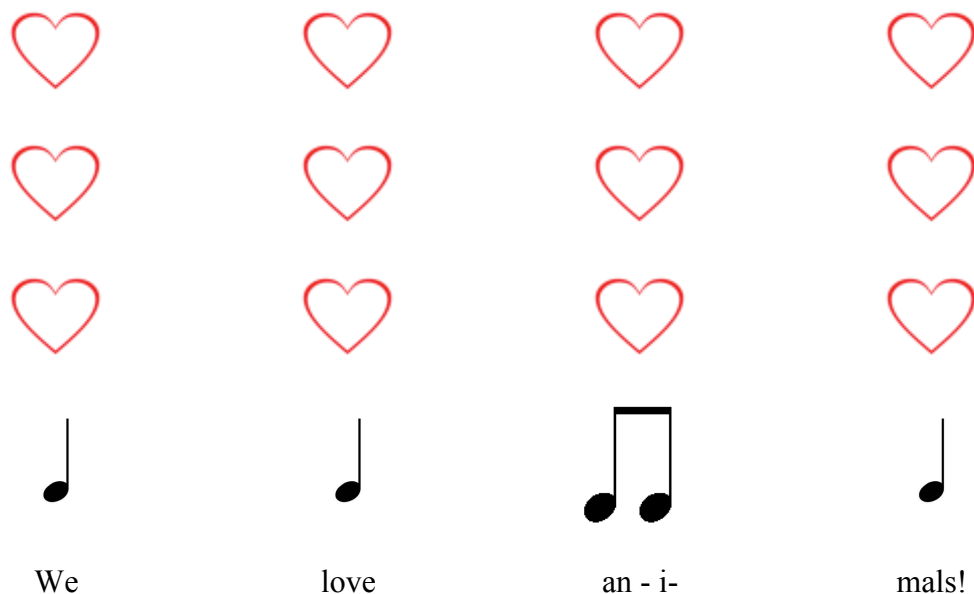


Figure 4.1 AAAB Rhythmic interactive chart.

Students create their own four-beat rhythm using only “cat” and “alligator” to represent the quarter note and four sixteenth notes respectively. “This time use at least one alligator,” Mr. Braun instructs the students. Students practice different rhythmic combinations of “cats” and “alligators” while Mr. Braun holds up four of his fingers and points at them one at a time to keep a steady beat. Several students share their improvisation and the class performs each of the rhythms. Mr. Braun challenges the students to create another rhythm using two “alligators.” He directs “Make up a new one that is completely different,” each time the class performs, Mr. Braun encourages them to change their rhythmic patterns.

Mr. Braun calls on a student to share his improvised rhythm. The student comes to the board and drags his rhythmic pattern into the first three lines of hearts on the Promethean Board and the words “We love an-i-mals!” are written under the last line of given rhythms by the teacher, creating an AAAB pattern, (Figure 4.2). The class performs the pattern by saying the words and clapping the rhythmic pattern, speaking the words only, and clapping the rhythmic pattern without speech. Mr. Braun asks the students for a two-syllable animal to represent two-eighth notes; the class decides on “monkey.” The students add the rhythm two-eighth notes to create a new four-beat rhythm. Several students come up to draw their pattern on the board and the class performs each student’s pattern together.

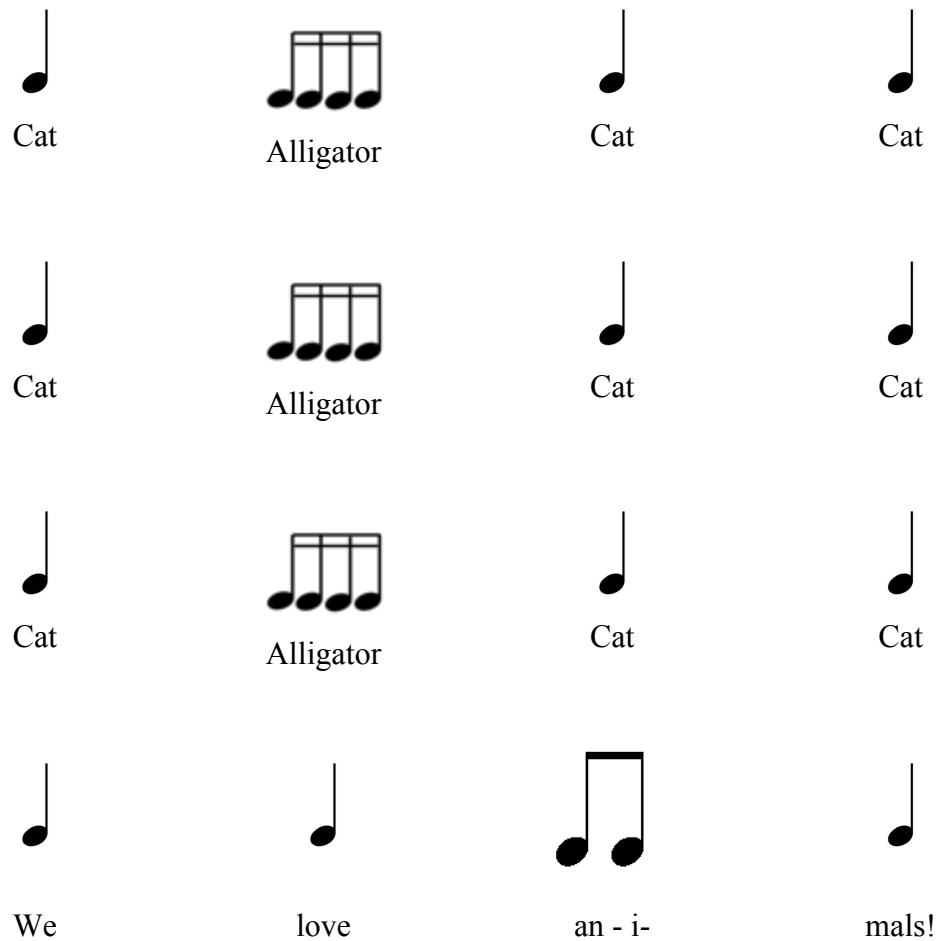


Figure 4.2 Student improvisation example.

After the challenge to use two or three beats of “monkey” or “alligator,” Mr. Braun asks the class to go back to his “boring pattern” of four “cats” and to sing the pattern on the solfege syllable “So.” Students sing the AAAB pattern, adding the solfege syllables mi, re, do, do, do to the “We love an-i-mals” B section, (Figure 4.3). “Now play your leg like an instrument bar using your hands as mallets,” and the class sings the AAAB pattern in solfege as they pat their legs as if playing a barred percussion instrument. One student volunteers to come to the front of the room and play the pitches on the bass xylophone while the rest of the class sing it a second time; the bass xylophone is arranged in C Pentatonic.



Figure 4.3 B section.

Mr. Braun calls on students individually to choose a xylophone or glockenspiel and mallets, and to arrange the instrument in C Pentatonic by removing the B and F bars. The class practices playing the AAAB pattern on their instrument using their chosen rhythms for the A section on the G bar (So). Mr. Braun asks the class to play the B section on their instrument as he sings the pitches on the neutral syllable “loo” and shows the corresponding body solfege. “If you love your A phrase keep it, if not, now’s the time to try a new one,” he says to the class as they readied to play the AAAB pattern again together. “If it didn’t go as you planned don’t panic; just try it again,” Mr. Braun says encouragingly.

The class plays their individual patterns a few more times and then one at a time students volunteer to share their improvisation. Each volunteer performs their rhythmic pattern for the A sections and the class joins them to perform the common B pattern. When students make mistakes during their sharing Mr. Braun encourages them to try again and/or to slow down their tempo.

Scene 2: Using visual imagery to inspire melodic improvisation. The Sixth Grade Class, on the second day of my visit, used a painting to inspire their melodic improvisations. Prior to the class entering the room, Mr. Braun draws Figure 4.4 on the white board to prepare the students for an eight-measure melodic improvisation in 2/4 time. Mr. Braun says, “Whenever my finger points to a blue dot, show the steady beat.” As Mr. Braun points to the dots in succession the class pats their legs to show the steady

beat. Mr. Braun asks the class a series of questions: “How many measures are there?” “How many beats are there in a measure?” “How many phrases are there?” “What are the notes at the end of each phrase?” The students answer each of the questions through discussion with a partner and then Mr. Braun calls on individual students in the class to answer each question aloud.

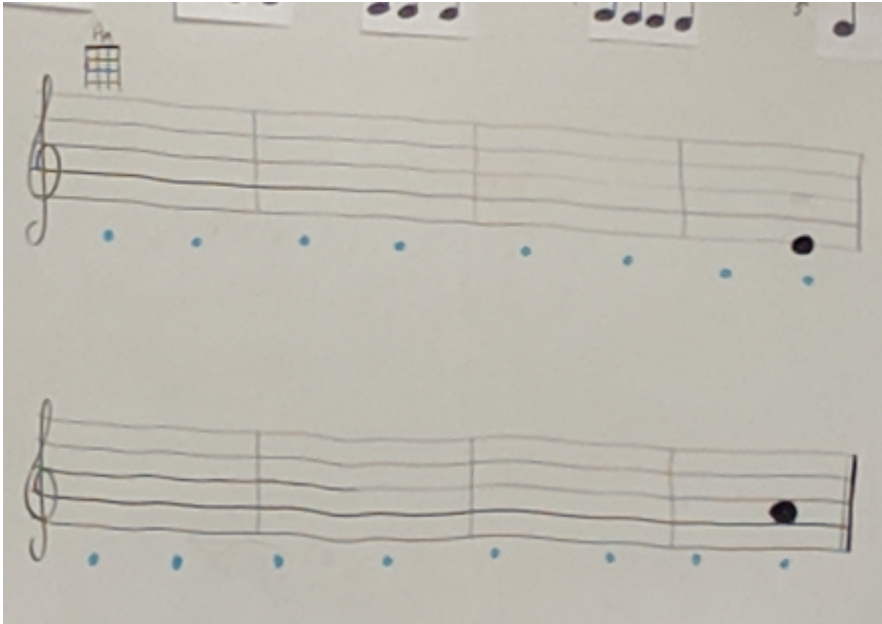


Figure 4.4 Two Musical Phrases.

At the board Mr. Braun guides the students through saying the note names for every beat: E for every beat in the first phrase and A for every beat in the second phrase. “How many people find that inspiring and fun?” asks Mr. Braun. The students acquire a barred instrument from the shelves in the back of the room, sit on the carpet facing the board, and arrange their instrument by removing the B and F bars.

The class performs the “boring version” on the xylophone, two times, as Mr. Braun plays a rhythmic pattern on a Cajon to help the class maintain a steady beat. Then Mr. Braun creates a list of qualities that make a good melody: it should be memorable, teachable to a friend, and should not sound sloppy. Mr. Braun models a melody that

includes unmetered rolls on bars, and asks the class, “What did I do that was not very musical?” “What’s wrong with what I just played?” Students raise their hand and share the reasons why Mr. Braun’s melody does not exhibit the qualities that he just listed as good qualities for a melody and then discuss how he could make his melody better.

Mr. Braun asks the class to play with more dynamic contrast and differing rhythms, beyond the steady beat, “something more interesting, but still has a relationship with the steady beat;” the class was still using only the note E for the first phrase and A for the second phrase. “This time quiet and louds – not all the same.” The students are then given the liberty to expand beyond the E and use the notes G and A above; they play the piece again. Students are reminded to play the E at the end of the first phrase and the A at the end of the second phrase, and to use any rhythms and the restrictive pitch set for the rest of the beats in the phrase. Mr. Braun leads them through playing the piece three times, encouraging them to change their rhythms and pitches each time and to make the piece more interesting.

Using metaphors, Mr. Braun encourages the class to play smooth improvisations “like ice on a pond.” “Make a sound of the icy wind.” Students practice their improvisations individually, and then they perform again as a whole group. Mr. Braun holds up a print of the painting “Home to Thanksgiving” by Currier and Ives, a snowy winter scene on a farm, and asks the students to choose something from the painting to use for inspiration. The class is told to use a descriptive word and a noun to give them inspiration for their improvisation; Mr. Braun uses the example “snowy white paper.” “Use that inspiration for the first phrase. Can you make the second phrase about

something else in the painting? Discuss what you're going to do with a neighbor."

Discussion ensued between partners in the class.

The class moves from their instrument to an open space in the room and Mr. Braun encourages the class to use vocal improvisation and movement to represent the two scenes that inspire their improvisation. Students explore different ways to represent their chosen elements of the painting; some make the sounds of wind while other move through the room on their hands and knees to represent an animal. "Now bring this back to your instrument and let's see if your playing changes. Did what you play change?" Mr. Braun asks a student to come to the front of the room and share his movements that represent his inspiration. The student moves across the floor in the front of the room on his hands and knees, Mr. Braun asks the class what they think the student's movements represented in the picture; they correctly identify the cow from the painting. The class performs their improvisation in ABA form where everyone plays their improvisation in the A sections and the one student moves during the B section. This is repeated several times then Mr. Braun asks half of the class to get a ukulele from the wall.

Those with a ukulele are asked to strum an A minor chord on the steady beat while the rest of the class play their improvisation on barred instruments; then they switched roles. Students volunteer to play their improvisation by themselves; as they are called on to perform they choose a partner to accompany them on ukulele. The ukuleles are returned to the wall and everyone plays again on the barred instruments. Mr. Braun asks the class to play their improvisations together and then calls on one student at a time to perform by themselves, approximately half of the class performs. Everyone plays their

improvisation together again, creating a rondo form where A is the whole class and the B, C, D, etc. are the individual improvisations (ABACADAE).

At the end of the class the students return all of the instruments and mallets and the teacher asks them questions as they line up at the door. "Where did all of that music come from? Who made that up?" He briefly describes improvisation and that they have created their own music for the majority of class.

Summary. Each class that I observed during my two-day visit of Mr. Braun and the students of Pleasant Hills Elementary School was filled with active music making and numerous opportunities for student choice and improvisation. While Mr. Braun discussed his desire to give up control and allow students to take control the lessons I observed were primarily teacher-directed. Each lesson contained a clear process for the sequence of activities Mr. Braun planned for his classes and students were given the opportunity for input within the guidelines set for each activity. Improvisation was, in most cases, used as an extension of a piece that the students had learned or were learning. The two unique points of interest were the Third Grade Class's use of animal names to represent rhythms in a rhythmic improvisation and painting to inspire the melodic improvisations of the Sixth Grade Classes.

Mrs. Tommie

Mrs. Tommie is in her 20th year in her current school district; twenty-two years teaching in all. She took the level one Orff Schulwerk course during her last year of college, before she student taught, and has been using the Orff approach for her entire teaching career. She also holds certification in the Dalcroze and Kodály methodologies. The musical elements and concepts in her district's music curriculum are based on the

traditional Kodály sequencing¹ of rhythms and pitches with “targeted benchmarks for each grade level” (interview, 10/26/17). In addition to teaching general music at Buckeye Intermediate School she also teaches Fifth and Sixth Grade chorus that meets in small groups as classes during the school day.

Buckeye Intermediate School. Buckeye Intermediate School is in a sprawling suburban community, with a rural feel, located approximately 30 minutes south of a major city, with a population of approximately 385,800 people. The two main roads that run through the town feature many restaurants, hotels, and stores, but the remaining town consists of farms and generously spaced housing developments. The school district services just over 2,100 students and consists of one of each: elementary school (K-3), intermediate school (4-6), middle school (7-8), and high school (9-12). The demographics of the Intermediate School are: 77.6% White, Non-Hispanic; 14.7% Black, Non-Hispanic; 3.5% Hispanic; 3.0% Multiracial; 14.3% Students with Disabilities; and 40.0% Economic Disadvantaged (according to the state website).

The town has two main roads that cut through the center of town lined with hotels, restaurants, and strip malls and the surrounding areas are more residential area. The Board of Education Office, Elementary School, Intermediate School, and Middle School are all on the same square-block, along with their bus depot; the High School is located at a different location a few miles away. Moving further from the center of town, one encounters sprawling farms.

The music room was a large open space distinctly divided into two sections – 1. The main part of the music room, to the right, has a Smart Board, upright piano, chairs in

¹ Traditional Kodály rhythmic and harmonic sequencing adapted from the original Hungarian as presented in “The Kodály Method I: Comprehensive Music Education” written by Lois Choksy (1999).

a semi-circle, choral risers setup, and the teacher's desk, and 2. A smaller section to the left containing a class set of xylophones on rolling stands, a drum set, and a large number of tubanos under a countertop. To the left, towards the xylophones, a large walk-in closet holds more classroom instruments, other items for music class, and costumes from previous shows.

Students at Buckeye Intermediate School have music class for 44 minutes on a four-day rotating schedule. All Fourth Grade students are required to take general music, but beginning in Fifth Grade students must choose a track between taking band, chorus, or general music; students are unable to be in more than one track.

Mrs. Tommie defined improvisation as “an instantaneous creation of music, but done within a structure” (interview, 1/31/18). She continued by discussing levels of development: “improvisation looks different depending on the developmental age and experience of the child” (interview, 1/31/18). In Mrs. Tommie's view there are two different purposes for teaching improvisation: the first is because improvisation is in the state and national standards and are considered an aspect of good music teaching and a comprehensive music curriculum, and the second reason is mainly aesthetic and allows students to express themselves through music for personal enjoyment and fulfillment. Mrs. Tommie provided a vignette to illustrate her point about the aesthetic value of teaching improvisation from a recent class:

[A student said to me], ‘This music class was my favorite and best one ever. It was awesome.’ And I looked right at her and I said, ‘Do you know why?’ And she said, ‘Because we played the instruments?’ I said, ‘You didn't just play the instruments, you made your *own* music today.’ She goes, ‘Yeah!’ (interview, 1/31/18).

Mrs. Tommie teaches improvisation to her students in all of her general music classes and it is included in the school district curriculum.

Scenes of Improvisation. I observed the students at Buckeye Intermediate School engaged in improvisation activities that fall into three different categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisation, 2. Melodic improvisation, and 3. Pre-compositional improvisation (see Table 4.4). In the sections to follow I will describe two scenes of improvisation that I observed Mrs. Tommie and her students engaged in during my two-day visit. The first scene follows a Fourth Grade class as they improvise a B section to a Blues piece using xylophones that began with a focus on steady beat and small rhythmic changes, and the second scene follows a Fifth Grade class as they improvise a call and response as a B section to the Work Song “Old House.”

Table 4.4

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mrs. Tommie's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
Strumming patterns	6 th grade classes improvised strumming patterns on the dulcimer for the folk song “Old Joe Clark.”
Four-beat untuned percussion	4 th grade classes improvised 4-beat rhythms on untuned percussion instruments.
Call and response body percussion	4 th grade classes improvised 8-beat call and response using body percussion.
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Call and response	5 th grade classes created call and response improvisations on recorder inspired by the African American Spiritual “Old House.”
	4 th grade classes created call and response improvisations on xylophones as an extension of their body percussion improvisations.
	4 th grade classes improvised call and responses on recorders in a blues pattern.
Scat vocal improvisations	4 th grade classes improvised vocally using scatting inspired by the Work Song “Old House.”
<i>Pre-compositional Improvisation</i>	
Composing through improvisations	4 th grade classes improvised melodically on xylophones until they found things that they liked and kept as a composition.

Scene 1: Melodic Blues improvisation. Mrs. Tommie leads the Fourth Grade class in performing a steady beat by counting to 8, clapping 8 beats, and then patting 8 beats on their legs. She writes the numbers one to eight on a white board on the left wall of the music room and leads the students in clapping once on each number. Mrs. Tommie adds two beamed eighth notes under one of the numbers and asks the students to clap eighth notes only on that beat. Several students are chosen to put eighth notes on different beats below where Mrs. Tommie wrote her eighth notes. The class has five different rows of rhythms and the class practices clapping each one as a new student is called on to add a new rhythm, (Figure 4.5).

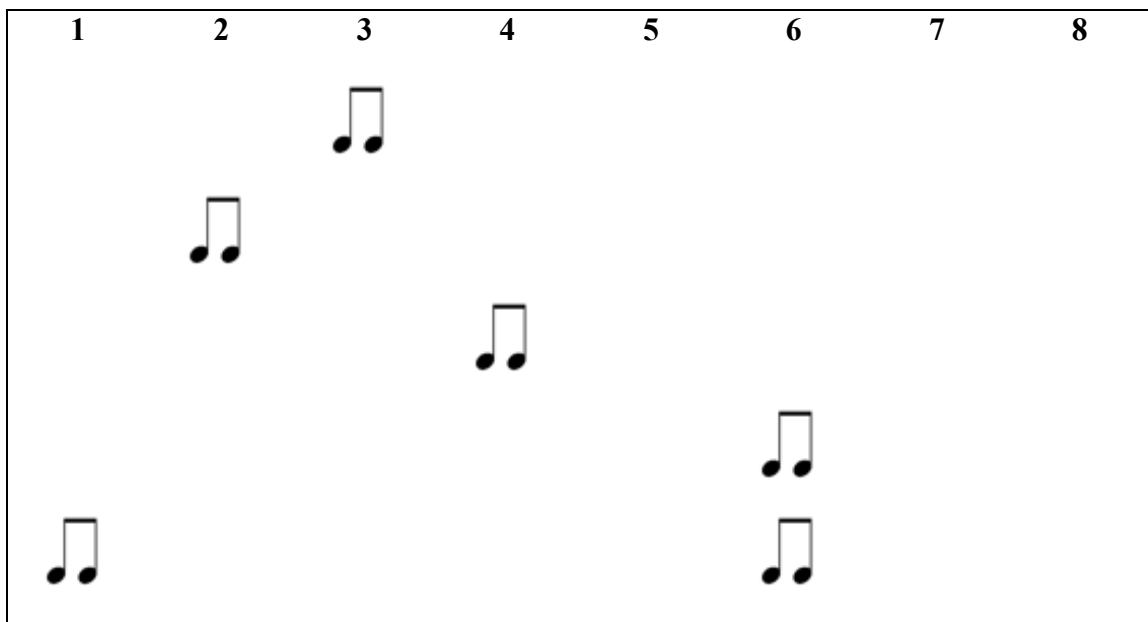


Figure 4.5 Eight-beat rhythms.

Mrs. Tommie then writes a syncopated rhythm (eighth note, quarter note, eighth note) and asks the students the length of the rhythm in beats. The class answers that the syncopated rhythm is two beats long. “Say 1, 2, ti ta ti,” Mrs. Tommie says, modeling how to perform the syncopated rhythms for the class. She erases the syncopated rhythm

and puts it on beats five and six – “look at it for a minute,” and the class performs the rhythm, saying “1, 2, 3, 4, ti ta ti, 7, 8.”

The class sits on the floor in front of the Smart Board, joining Mrs. Tommie who sits with an alto xylophone in front of her, (Figure 4.6). Mrs. Tommie plays the notes E, G, A, B-flat, A, G, E, E in quarter notes on the xylophone, (Figure 4.7). Then she models making changes to the rhythms of the melody by playing through the melody twice and changing one of the quarter notes to two eighth notes the first time, and then the syncopated rhythm (eighth note, quarter note, eighth note) the second time, (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.6 Xylophone setup.



Figure 4.7 Mrs. Tommie's xylophone melody.

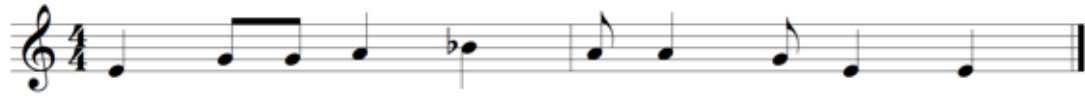


Figure 4.8 Example rhythmic variant melody.

Mrs. Tommie explains that they are creating a piece in AABA motific² form where the A sections are the melody from Figure 4.7 with two rhythmic variant choices that each student will make, and the B section will be an improvised section of eight beats that moves higher on the xylophone and uses more eighth notes. The class performs the A section together; each student individually choosing one beat of the rhythm to change. The class performs the A section together again, this time individually changing another rhythm. The students group in partners, standing with their xylophone facing each other, and share with each other what they played for the a melody section.

Mrs. Tommie asks the class to improvise a B section. “You are allowed to move away from those first four bars,” and students take a few minutes to practice playing through their ideas for the B section. The class performs their B sections together, once they conclude Mrs. Tommie suggests the students swing the rhythms more. The class practices on their own, playing the full AABA pattern using their fingers on the xylophones instead of mallets. “Is everyone happy with what they came up with? If you don’t like it change it.”

The students at soprano and alto xylophones play through their piece with mallets while the students on the bass xylophones and a student who is selected to play the sub-contra bass bars are instructed to play the roots of the chord changes written on the board by Mrs. Tommie; Mrs. Tommie plays a basic swing pattern on drum set that includes

² Motif form is usually written in lower case letters, but for the ease of the reader they are written in upper case letters in this dissertation.

bass drum, snare drum, and ride cymbal, see Figure 4.9. Mrs. Tommie then discusses what she calls “good qualities of a melody” – “If home tone is E, you start on it, end on it, play it a lot. Also use upper neighbor tones and lower neighbor tones and passing tones.” The class performs the AABA pattern five times: the first time with both partners at the same time, the second and fourth time partner one played alone, and the third and fifth time partner two played alone. Each time the partner not performing is watching their partner and using their performance as a way to get ideas for their own improvisation.



Figure 4.9 Basic swing drum set pattern.

Scene 2: Call and response melodic improvisation. As the students enter the room students who have forgotten their recorder retrieve one from a bucket near Mrs. Tommie’s desk. Before Mrs. Tommie leads the class in singing the work song “Old House,” a call and response song, the students are asked to find a partner and stand in the space in front of the chairs. Mrs. Tommie asks, “Is the response in the song the same each time?” The class responds that it is not and Mrs. Tommie asks the class to determine if there is a pattern in the responses where one has higher pitches than the other. “Where does the pattern change?” asks Mrs. Tommie. A student responds that the first response is higher and the second response is lower.

Mrs. Tommie projects the music of the first response in the song on the Smart Board that includes recorder fingerings. The class sits in their chairs and echoes Mrs. Tommie as she plays the recorder: four-beat patterns using the notes G and E. Students

are chosen to be leaders and direct the class in echoing what they played. All of the melodic patterns are four-beat patterns using only the notes G and E and only quarter notes and eighth notes.

After some improvisatory echo playing, Mrs. Tommie sings the song – singing the words of the call and letter names of the notes for the response: “Old House, EEG, who’s gonna help me, DD-E.” The class sings with Mrs. Tommie while fingering the notes on their recorder. Mrs. Tommie sings the call section of the song and the students play the response on their recorder, then the students divide into pairs and play the response for their partner; the partners correct each other as needed. Mrs. Tommie instructs the class to fill in the call section with something they create on the recorder instead of singing. “Let’s review your choice of notes: E, G, A, or B,” explains Mrs. Tommie.

Mrs. Tommie models an 8-beat improvisation on recorder and the students practice improvising on their own. The class sings “1, 2, 3, 4 tear it down.” Then one student is chosen to come to the front of the class and improvise rhythms on the first four beats on the note B and the class plays the response section as written. Students practice on their own call section with their partner. A few students count aloud “1, 2, 3, 4” for their partner as they improvise the call section, and then they perform the response section.

The students move from being scattered throughout the room to creating two concentric circles facing their partner. Each partner group takes turns improvising a call and response while Mrs. Tommie plays an accompaniment on the piano until every group has an opportunity to perform their improvisation. At the conclusion the partners switch

jobs (the call becomes the response and vice versa) and the class improvises around the circle a second time. "Why don't you take another try at it?" Mrs. Tommie asks a student who struggled while he improvised; the next time he plays his rhythms are clearer and more recognizable.

"Sarah, play again and this time add the note 'A,'" says Mrs. Tommie. Another student is asked to play again and to use the notes A and G in addition to the B. "I like that you're taking rhythms from the song," Mrs. Tommie compliments one student. The class takes turns improvising around the circle a third time with all students adding the notes A and G into their improvisation. Mrs. Tommie gives constructive suggestions and compliments to students as they improvise.

Summary. The unique qualities of the improvisation activities observed in Mrs. Tommie's classes are characterized by two elements: 1. A focus on steady beat and rhythmic before melodic improvisation and 2. Real-world context to improvisation. In this section, I discuss each of these elements as they relate to the scenes of improvisation above.

The first element is the focus on steady beat and rhythmic before melodic improvisation. The first scene of improvisation most easily illustrates this where the class began by performing eight beats of quarter notes and changing only one beat at a time. Ample time was devoted for the students to keep a steady beat as a class. This activity later moved to the xylophone where students were asked to change one beat, and later a second beat, of rhythms to a given melody written by Mrs. Tommie.

The second element is the real-world musical context created for students in improvisational activities. Students improvised in the common and familiar form of call

and response. The Fifth Grade Classes made improvisational rhythmic changes to a melody written by Mrs. Tommie and improvised a B section of their choosing. Mrs. Tommie kept the class together and gave the piece some context by playing the drum set as an accompaniment. She played two eighth notes and a quarter note on the snare drum at the end of each phrase to signal to the students that the phrase was complete. This non-verbal cue compelled students to listen as they performed and challenged them to perform within a more realistic “real-world” situation.

Mr. Andrews

Mr. Andrews holds degrees in both music education and music composition. He was drawn to Orff Schulwerk because of its “emphasis on creativity and hands-on creation: the doing and making of music and movement, instead of solely the consuming of, or academic study of music” (interview, 11/16/17). Mr. Andrews has been teaching for 12 years, seven of which are at The Pond Forest School. Mr. Andrews teaches General Music to grades Four through Six and a mandatory Sixth Grade Chorus; the program K-6 is an Orff Schulwerk-inspired program as there is another Orff Schulwerk-trained music teacher that teaches Kindergarten through Third Grade General Music.

As a junior and senior in high school Mr. Andrews attended a summer camp for music in New Hampshire called The Walden School (<http://waldenschool.org/>), where he honed his interest in composing. He described his experience at The Walden School during an interview:

It's a 5-week intensive course that was life changing and transformative, because their improvisation was a critical and rudimentary part of everything. Of all of the musicianship coursework, of all of the keyboard work, of all the everything. You don't compose without first improvising. And to have that, sort of, hammered on for a summer helps, sort of, switch my mindset around from improvisation being terrifying to improvisation being just like drawing or just like sculpture or

something. The first whole bunch of times you do it it's butt-ugly, but there's no reason to stop and no one's going to get hurt if it's bad, and the only way you're going to get better is by doing it. (2/1/18)

Mr. Andrews believes that improvisation is part of the natural process that composers go through to explore different rhythms, melodies, harmonic structures, and instrument timbres during the beginning stages of the compositional process.

Mr. Andrews described the purpose of improvisation as an activity to “build and tone your creative muscles. I think of improvisation as to music, as I think of calisthenics to the body. It's just an important part of any workout” (interview, 2/1/18). He continued by stating “it's also a critical part of so very many genres and styles of music around the world, that to let those muscles atrophy does a disservice in real-world music making. What is the point of my job? It's to prepare students for non-professional, real world, music making, and movement making, in a way that they find engaging” (interview, 2/1/18). Mr. Andrews stated, in his second interview, that improvisation and composition are essential to Orff Schulwerk and that teachers that do not include student creation are “completely missing the point” (2/1/18) of the approach.

The Pond Forest School. The Pond Forest School, founded in 1904, is a coed K-12 independent school, on a 90-acre wooded campus three miles outside of a major city, with a population of approximately 694,000 people. There are just over 1,000 students, K-12, enrolled in the 2017/2018 school year (according to the school's website). The tuition to attend the school ranges from over \$34,000 a year for Kindergarten through 3rd Grade, to just under \$40,000 a year for grades 9-12; financial assistance is available. Mr. Andrews described the school population as “very wealthy” (interview, 11/16/17). Mr.

Andrews teaches his Sixth Grade classes for 50 minutes a week, his Fifth Grade classes for an hour a week, and his Fourth Grade classes twice a week for 40 minutes each class.

The main thoroughfare in town is a busy road that weaves through areas of very large, expensive homes on the way to The Pond Forest School. One turn off of the main road led me through a smaller neighborhood that goes to the entrance of the gated school grounds. At the entrance a friendly security guard at a guardhouse met me before I entered the campus.

The campus of the school looked like a well-manicured university campus with multiple buildings on both sides of the private drive cutting through the middle of the campus. An artificial turf football field with a bright track around the outside was on the left as I drove past the first building on the right-hand side of the road. Mr. Andrews's music room was located down the hill in the Performing Arts Building.

The music classrooms were located on the second floor of the Performing Arts Building where Mr. Andrews's and the instrumental music classrooms were located. The music room had a hard wood sprung floor with an area rug that covered all but the outer edge. There was a mirrored wall on the right side, two white boards and a Smart Board in the front of the room, tubanos and a teacher's desk on the left side of the room, and instrument storage cabinets and bookcases in the back of the room. Classroom instruments (xylophones, hand drums, tubanos, recorders, and accessory percussion instruments) were arranged throughout the music room. The walls of the room contained signs and posters, made by the teacher, that define different musical terms, and feature diverse composers and musicians. There was an industrial feel to the classroom because of an exposed metal-beamed ceiling and visible industrial heating and cooling ducts.

Since the Performing Arts Building is separate from the building(s) where students have their other classes, the students enter the music room through a back door. When students enter the building through the back door they enter into a coatroom where they left their coats and store their shoes, which they removed for class. Mr. Andrews greeted the students at the door to the outside of the building and then a second time as they entered the music room from the coatroom.

Scenes of Improvisation. The Fourth through Sixth Grade music classes at The Pond Forest School engaged in varied improvisation activities during my two-day visit that fell into four different categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisations, 2. Melodic improvisations, 3. Movement improvisations, and 4. Pre-compositional improvisation, see Table 4.5. In the following sections I will describe two scenes of improvisation activities that I observed Mr. Andrews and his students engage in. The first scene follows a Fifth Grade Class performing an improvised blues solo on recorder over a I-IV-V blues progression planned using chord tones, and the second scene follows a Fourth Grade Class performing a melodic ostinato on recorder inspired by “Electric Counterpoint” by Steve Reich.

Table 4.5

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mr. Andrew's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
Rhythm Poison Game	4 th , 5 th , and 6 th grade classes played the game "Rhythm Poison" where the leader of the game improvises rhythms in differing body percussion attempting to fool their classmates into performing the designated "Poison Rhythm" that is not supposed to be echoed.
Concentration 64 Game	4th grade class played the game "Concentration 64" where students need to improvise a word in a given category.
Chinese New Year Lion Drumming Improvisation	5 th grade classes improvised drumming patterns inspired by a Chinese New Year Lion Drumming piece.
Improvising jazz "lick" rhythms	5 th grade class improvised differing rhythms from a list of rhythms provided by Mr. Andrews called "Lick Book."
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Improvised blues solo on recorder	5 th grade classes improvised a blues solo on recorder using chord tone notes given by Mr. Andrews.
Ostinato improvisation on recorder	4 th grade classes improvised a 3- and 6-beat melodic ostinato on recorder inspired by Steve Reich's "Electric Counterpoint."
<i>Movement Improvisation</i>	
Improvising movement to various time signatures	4 th grade classes improvised movements as they moved through the classroom to Mr. Andrews playing rhythmic patterns in differing time signatures.
Moving while drumming	5 th grade classes were encouraged to improvise movement through the room as they played rhythmic patterns on hand drums.
<i>Pre-compositional Improvisation</i>	
Improvising to find rhythmic and melodic patterns to create a composition	4 th , 5 th , and 6 th grade classes improvised rhythmically and melodically to make decisions about elements of their compositions.

Scene 1: Improvised Blues Solo on Recorder. The Fifth Grade Classes are preparing an improvised blues solo for the song *C Jam Blues* on their recorder. Mr. Andrews projects on the Smart Board a 12-Bar Blues pattern with the letter names of the triads above each of the chord symbols, and he plays the blues progression on the piano as the students listen. After reviewing the recorder fingerings through a rap that he composed, students echo four-beat melodic passages on their soprano recorder as Mr. Andrews plays on a tenor recorder. All of the notes in the chord progression are in

columns above the chord symbol on the board and Mr. Andrews asks students to choose one note from each chord and play it as a whole note as he plays the progression on the piano and the hi-hat on beats two and four at the same time.

Mr. Andrews passes out a worksheet entitled "Take a Blues Solo!" (see Figure 4.10) to each student as they continue to work on their solo from the previous class. As the students play through their blues solos Mr. Andrews encourages them to make any changes they want. The class practices their solos on their own and then with Mr. Andrews accompanying on the piano. After the playing through of the solos a second time they are given a moment to make changes and then Mr. Andrews asks them to add a C or a C² to the end of their solo. Mr. Andrews leads the students again in playing the C *Jam Blues*; he plays on the piano while the students play the melody of the song on recorder, using only the notes G and C. After they play the melody of the song they play their blues solos, all at the same time, ending with the new C or C².

Class: _____ Take a BLUES SOLO! Name: _____

Circle one pitch in each box. (Level 1) *The parenthetical pitches are for bonus points!

I C E G (B ^b) C ²	IV C F A C ² (E ^{b2})	I C E G (B ^b) C ²	I C E G (B ^b) C ²
IV C F A C ² (E ^{b2})	IV C F A C ² (E ^{b2})	I C E G (B ^b) C ²	I C E G (B ^b) C ²
V D (F) G B D ²	IV C F A C ² (E ^{b2})	I C E G (B ^b) C ²	V D (F) G B D ²

Figure 4.10 “Take a Blues Solo!” Worksheet.

Afterwards, Mr. Andrews picks up his recorder and leads the students in a rhythmic echo, playing many rhythms swung, on the single note G (see Figure 4.11). Mr. Andrews models a 4-beat rhythmic pattern to be played for each chord tone and gives the students time to practice rhythmic patterns of their own. Mr. Andrews says, “If you mess up your rhythms do I care? No, just make sure you switch notes at the right time.” The students perform the song in ternary form (ABA), where the A is everyone playing the melody of the song, and the B is everyone playing their blues solos at the same time. The students play through the chord changes one more time, making changes to their rhythm and focusing on changing their chosen note of the chord at the correct time before the class ends and they pack up their recorder.



Figure 4.11 Teacher-led Rhythmic Echo on the Recorder.

Scene 2: Melodic Ostinato Improvisation Inspired by “Electric Counterpoint”

by Steve Reich. Prior to my site visit, the Fourth Grade classes began writing a three-beat complimentary³ ostinato, in 3/4 time, with a partner to be performed on their recorder.

Mr. Andrews begins the activity I observed by projecting a photo of the class’ ostinati that is written on small dry-erase white boards. Students look for two rhythms on the pictures of the white boards that are complimentary; the rhythms used are quarter notes, quarter rests, two-beamed eighth notes, and four-beamed sixteenth notes. One student points out two complimentary rhythms; he performs one of the rhythms while Mr.

Andrews performs the other rhythm. The class performs three separate combinations of rhythms with Mr. Andrews performing the complimentary rhythm and then they practice their own rhythms, “If you don’t like yours, or you weren’t here, learn a different one” referring to the rhythms that are still projected on the Smart Board.

³ “Complementary rhythm is that relation between voices or groups of voices in which one voice fills out the gaps in the movement of the others, thus maintaining the *motus*, i.e., the regular subdivision of the measure” (Schoenberg, 2016, p. 194).

Mr. Andrews instructs the class to practice their ostinati on recorder; the class uses the notes of the E Dorian scale, (Figure 4.12). As the students practice performing their ostinato, Mr. Andrews walks through the room and listens to different student's improvisations. Mr. Andrews reminds the class, "when one is boring, the other should be more busy." Students who use simpler rhythms (quarter notes and eighth notes) are encouraged to use a variety pitches and students with more complex rhythms (sixteenth notes) are encouraged to use less pitches, (Figure 4.13). The students practice saying their rhythms, four times in a row, using rhythm syllables as Mr. Andrews keeps the steady beat on a Ngoma Drum.

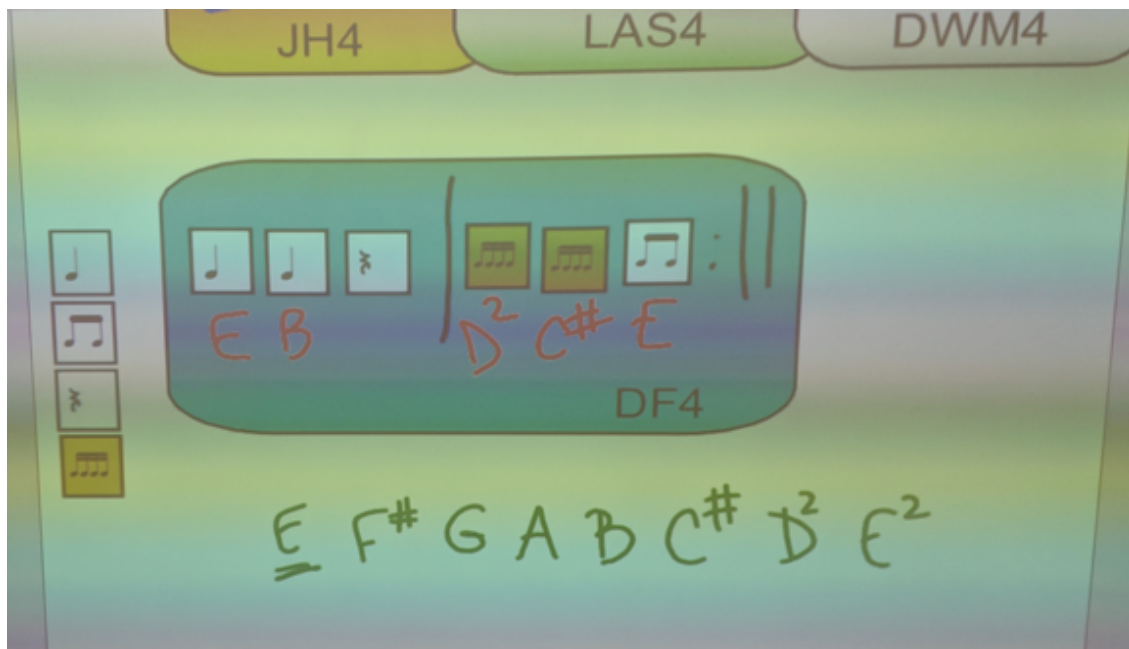


Figure 4.12 Six-Beat Melodic Ostinato Example.



Figure 4.13 Student Examples of Plans for Melodic Ostinato Improvisations.

All of the improvisations are directed to begin on the tonic, E, and to use the note B, the dominant. Mr. Andrews tells the class that they do not need to end on the tonic or dominant since they are performing ostinati and will be repeating the melodic pattern. The students begin working with a partner and Mr. Andrews asks them to combine their improvisations to make a six-beat ostinato and gives them about a minute to practice. The partner groups perform their six-beat ostinati together, as a class, at a faster tempo, led by Mr. Andrews keeping the steady beat, six times in a row.

Mr. Andrews plays a recording of Steve Reich's "Electric Counterpoint," movement three, and tells the students to play their ostinati along with the recording. The class plays with the recording for approximately three minutes. As the students perform Mr. Andrews encourages them to improvise changes to their ostinato pattern and to stand and move through the room while they perform their ostinato pattern. As Mr. Andrews

turns off the recording and students sit down he asks, "Who made a change? Is it okay to make a change?" Many students raise their hand to affirm that they changed their ostinato pattern during the performance and students answer "yes," it is okay to make changes to their ostinato.

Summary. In all of Mr. Andrews' classes, improvisation activities were weaved in and out of other musical activities that the students were engaged in during my two-day visit to The Pond Forest School. Most of the music activities included improvisation in some way as students took what they learned from Mr. Andrews and created something new of their own. Mr. Andrews used a very sequential approach to how he led students through different parameters of their improvisations, allowing more options of student choice as the students became more comfortable with the previous choices.

Mr. Gonzalez

Mr. Gonzalez is an energetic and thoughtful teacher who is in his eighth year of teaching; this is his first year at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School. He has employed the Orff approach his entire teaching career, after being introduced to Orff Schulwerk by his Undergraduate Elementary General Music Methods teacher, who was Orff Schulwerk-certified. Mr. Gonzalez was drawn to Orff Schulwerk due to its use of the xylophone and the utilization of "creativity in students through movement" (interview, 11/14/17).

Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School. Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School is part of a city school district; the city has a population of approximately 153,000 people. Theodore Roosevelt is a Kindergarten through Fifth Grade elementary school of 546 students who are demographically: 59% White, 31% Hispanic, 6% African

American, 4% Unspecified, and 0.5% Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian, according to the school's website. Additionally, the district's website boasts award-winning band and orchestra programs under the heading of "Special Academic Programs." The students at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School have music class once a week for 45 minutes.

The music room contained a class set of xylophones, glockenspiels, tubanos, hand drums, and other accessory percussion instruments. The barred instruments were setup in the back of the classroom, to the left as you walk in the door to the room. On the left side of the room there were shelves and the teacher's desk. Windows run the length of the room above the shelving and teacher's desk. The front of the room had a Smart Board and the front right corner of the room had a rolling white board and electronic piano in front of a bookcase and other percussion instruments. The right wall had shelving and cabinets with posters of musical terms and instrument families attached. While the room had fluorescent lights in the ceiling, the room was lit by two soft light pole lamps on either side of the room and the ambient light through the windows; the overhead lights were never turned on during my two-day visit.

The day was already warming as I left my hotel and traveled on a major highway, over a bridge, and into the city from my hotel. After a few turns I came to a more residential area of the city; the residences began as row homes, changing to Brownstones, and then smaller single-family homes leading to large estate homes, and another turn towards the school brought me back to slightly smaller single-family homes. The school does not have a parking lot so I parked on a cross street, about a block from the school.

From the outside the school looked like a large older school; it was built in 1939 and its most recent renovation was in 2014 (according to the school website).

When I reached the entrance to the building I buzzed into the main office where I entered my name and who I was visiting into a computer and a secretary gave me a printed visitor's pass. A teacher who was in the office accompanied me to the music room, just a short walk and two turns from the main office. The music room was a medium-sized room in a corner of the hallway next to a copy room.

Scenes of Improvisation. The students of Mr. Gonzalez's Third through Fifth Grade music classes were musically engaged and participated in various improvisation activities that fell into four different categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisations, 2. Melodic improvisations, 3. Movement improvisations, and 4. Expressive improvisations, (Table 4.6). In the following sections I will depict two scenes of improvisational activities that Mr. Gonzalez and his students engaged in during my two-day visit. The first scene follows a Third Grade Class in their exploration of movement improvisation inspired by a song, and the second scene follows a Fifth Grade Class in a melodic improvisation activity that uses the different ranges of the xylophone for different sections of their improvisation to extend a piece.

Table 4.6

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mr. Gonzalez's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
Body percussion ostinati	4 th grade classes improvised different body percussion ostinati to accompany a song.
Word-chaining	3 rd grade classes improvised rhythmically by string together words or phrases that they might find as a headline in a newspaper.
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Pentatonic improvisation over a drone to extend a song	5 th grade classes improvised a melody over a changing drone on xylophones in Do and La Pentatonic as a B section to a song.
Call and response	3 rd grade classes improvised a call and response using the notes A and C on the recorder.
<i>Movement Improvisation</i>	
Elements in movement	3 rd grade classes added different elements to their movements (small and large steps, a twirl, a leap, and change of direction) as Mr. Gonzalez kept a steady beat on temple blocks.
Create geometric shapes	4 th grade classes made geometric shapes with their bodies and with other students.
<i>Expressive Improvisation</i>	
Change music through expressive elements	4 th grade classes changed timbre, through differing vocal styles, and tempi while performing a song.

Scene 1: Movement improvisation inspired by a song. Mr. Gonzalez greets the Third Grade Class in the hallway and as they enter the room there is a message on the Smart Board with a question: "What is the distance from Wibbleton to Wobbleton?" in reference to a song in James Harding's book *From Wibbleton to Wobbleton* (2013). After a student answers that it is 15 miles from Wibbleton to Wobbleton, Mr. Gonzalez asks the class to stand and spread out through the room. "What if you were a giant and each step you took was a mile? How many steps would you have to take?" asks Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez leads the class as they move through the room by playing the temple blocks. "Each hit [on the temple blocks] is a step," Mr. Gonzalez says as he plays the temple block 15 times as the students walk through the room.

As the class prepares to move through the room again Mr. Gonzalez asks, "Can you make a combination of steps forward and backward?" Mr. Gonzalez praises students who walked quietly and with small steps; the 23 students in the class are crowded as they move through the room. Each time Mr. Gonzalez stops playing the temple blocks he immediately gives a new direction to add to their movement. As the class moves through the room they include small and large steps, and then add a twirl, all within 15 counts. Mr. Gonzalez then says, "Put your twirl in a different spot this time," as the students prepare to move again.

Mr. Gonzalez walks to the middle of the room to model his next step, "this time add a jump, but the jump and twirl have to be in different spots." The class watches as Mr. Gonzalez uses small and large steps, a twirl, and a jump as he moves through the room counting to 15. During the class's next attempt, a few students fall to the ground on count 15 and Mr. Gonzalez reminds them to keep two feet on the ground and freeze at the end. Lastly, Mr. Gonzalez asks the class to add one count where they touch a hand to the floor. "I noticed a lot of interesting poses at the end. Can you end in an interesting pose this time?" The class moves through the room one more time adding all of the elements that were layered in by Mr. Gonzalez.

Scene 2: Melodic improvisation on xylophone. Prior to my observation, Mr. Gonzalez's Fifth Grade classes learned how to play "Mrs. Hen" from James Harding's book *From Wobbleton to Wobbleton* (2013, pp. 154-155) on the xylophone. One at a time students are called on to choose a partner and move different size barred instruments to face each other (e.g. alto xylophone with bass xylophone or soprano glockenspiel with soprano xylophone). Mr. Gonzalez asks the class to setup their instruments in C

pentatonic; students are heard reciting the line from a poster on the wall to remove “the burger and fries” – the B and F bars.

The class practices playing the melody, four measures in 4/4 time, by themselves. Mr. Gonzalez chooses two students to play the C and G contrabass bars and asks the class to echo different rhythms on the drone notes, (Figure 4.14); Mr. Gonzalez pats the rhythms on his legs. After playing the first drone a few times, Mr. Gonzalez asks the class to play a new drone on the notes A and E, see Figure 4.15; this time Mr. Gonzalez claps the rhythms. “When I pat I want you to play the C and G drone and when I clap I want you to play the A and E drone,” said Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez leads the class through different combinations of the two drones in 4-, 8-, and 16-beat rhythmic combinations, (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.14 Drones on C and G.



Figure 4.15 Drones on A and E.

Mr. Gonzalez then adds another layer to the drone patterns –he snaps his fingers and the class plays the highest notes, G and A, (Figure 4.17). The class echoes varying rhythmic patterns with different combinations of the drone following Mr. Gonzalez as he pats, claps, or snaps, (Figure 4.18). “What if we alternate on G and A? Start on G” suggests Mr. Gonzalez. The class adds the alternating G and A to the drone pattern, playing each of the drones 16 times, see Figure 4.19.

**Figure 4.16** Four-, eight-, and sixteen-beat drone combinations.**Figure 4.17** Rhythmic drones on G and A.



Figure 4.18 Rhythmic patterns combining all three drones.



Figure 4.19 Drone pattern with alternating G and A at the end.

Moving away from the accompaniment, Mr. Gonzalez asks the class to play the pattern that he sang, using only the notes C, D, E, and G, and he sings the pitches using absolute letter names, (Figure 4.20). “Can someone show me an example of a step?” Students individually play examples of pitches that are a step apart. “What if I said, ‘step-ping’ and you played two notes a step apart?” asks Mr. Gonzalez. Each time he says “step-ping” the class echoes with two pitches that are a step apart in quarter notes. Mr. Gonzalez uses a poster of the C pentatonic scale with yellow magnets on the bars C, D, E, and G and reminds students to only play the notes that were yellow. The class also

echoes Mr. Gonzalez as he goes on to say “leap-ing” with two notes that are a greater distance apart.



Figure 4.20 Melodic patterns using C, D, E, and G.

The class combines steps and leaps in patterns that Mr. Gonzalez says first and then that they create on their own. They repeat all of the previous steps using the middle notes, A, C, D, and E - Mr. Gonzalez labels these notes on the poster with green magnets. After the class has practiced improvising using the lower and middle pitch sets Mr. Gonzalez says, “Now first 16 lower notes, second 16 middle notes. You make all the choices about when to step or leap.” Mr. Gonzalez counts the class off in the beginning and says “ready, move” when it is time to switch to the middle notes.

A student plays an accompanying drone pattern, (Figure 4.18) while Mr. Gonzalez models an improvisation, and then the class practices improvising with their partner - one person plays the drone accompaniment and the other person performs the improvisation. When they reach the last 8-beat section of G’s and A’s both people in the partner groups play it in unison. The class practices for five minutes using the handles of the mallets on the bars, as Mr. Gonzalez walks through the room listening and assisting

students individually as they practice improvising with their partner. After the five minute time period, the class performs their improvisations together as a class.

Mr. Gonzalez asks for volunteers to share and three groups share. One group switches that performs the drone and improvisation when the drone changes, while the other two groups have the same person play the drone and improvisation for the entire time. The class practices again, playing with their mallet handles; as Mr. Gonzalez goes through the room listening to each group perform again. Mr. Gonzalez is heard counting out loud for a group as they perform for him. Mr. Gonzalez tells the class that next week every group will have a chance to share their improvisation with the class.

Summary. The students of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School were very responsive to Mr. Gonzalez during the improvisation activities. Mr. Gonzalez had established a safe learning environment where students took risks and made changes to the music they performed with little to no hesitation. He led his classes through music activities that consisted of clear and systematic processes to build on student music making that included improvisational activities integrated into the music that they had and/or were learning. The Third Grade classes added a movement element, one at a time, to create an improvisation inspired by the song “From Wibbleton to Wobbleton,” and the Fifth Grade classes created melodic improvisations using different areas of the xylophone for different sections of their improvisations.

Mrs. Beasley

Mrs. Beasley began teaching in a state in the south where she grew up. She has been teaching music at Northeast Elementary School for 8 of her 15 years in the profession. From my first time speaking with her she was very enthusiastic and eager to

share her knowledge and experience. Mrs. Beasley was introduced to the Orff Schulwerk approach as an Undergraduate student by her Elementary General Music Methods teacher and has used the approach her entire teaching career. She recalls her first encounter with Orff Schulwerk:

I walked in the first day and saw all of the Orff barred percussion instruments on the floor; I had never seen anything like that before, because my own music education when I was growing up was very different. It immediately peaked my curiosity and I had no idea what was going on, and being a percussion major, I was like – How do I not know about these? (interview, 10/28/17)

The summer after she graduated with her Bachelor's degree she enrolled in Orff Schulwerk level one training.

Northeast Elementary School. Northeast Elementary School is a Title 1 urban elementary school in the center of a major metropolitan city that has a population of 8.5 million people. There are 324 students, Prekindergarten through Fifth Grade, enrolled at Northeast Elementary, that is demographically 13% Black or African American, 45% Hispanic or Latino, 21% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 19% White, and 2% Multiracial, with 10% English Language Learners, 31% Students with Disabilities, and 50% Economically Disadvantaged (according to the state's school report card). At Northeast Elementary School students have music class once a week for 50 minutes. The blocks surrounding Northeast Elementary School are filled with crowded streets of pedestrians and thick rows of traffic from cars, buses, and taxis. Some of the features of the area are restaurants, stores, and businesses, and some Brownstone homes within the last few blocks leading to the school.

Upon entering the school, I signed in with the security officer and proceeded to the music room, which was down a flight of stairs and to the right of a large cafeteria.

The music room appeared small at first glance, but contained many storage spaces that housed an array of untuned and pitched percussion instruments, hand puppets, movement props, and other materials for the music classes. Along the left wall were posters with recorder fingerings, a word wall, a music theory bulletin board, and a chart called “Weekly Music Objectives;” under the various posters are shelves that contain varied accessory percussion instruments (guiros, rhythm sticks, woodblocks, etc.), props, finger puppets, and recorders. The back wall contains two Wenger practice rooms and a walk in closet. The right wall features three cabinet closets that contain barred percussion instruments, and the front of the room has the teacher’s desk, an upright piano, a Smart Board, and a music lined dry-erase board. A multi-colored carpet that features different squares for student seating took up a good portion of the floor in the middle of the room.

Scenes of Improvisation. The Fourth and Fifth Grade music classes at Northeast Elementary School engaged in varied improvisation activities during my three-day visit. The improvisational activities that I observed fell into two different categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisations, and 2. Melodic improvisations, (Table 4.7). In the following sections I will describe two scenes of improvisation activities that I observed Mrs. Beasley and her students engaged in during my visit. The first scene follows a Fourth Grade Class who began improvising a body percussion accompaniment to an African American Spiritual that led to a melodic improvisation during the response sections on xylophones, and the second scene follows a Fifth Grade Class as it develops a melodic improvisation, on xylophones, to extend the popular song “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.”

Table 4.7

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mrs. Beasley's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
A Body percussion to accompany a song	4 th grade classes improvised a body percussion accompaniment to an African American Spiritual.
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Call and response	4 th grade classes improvised in G Pentatonic in the response section of a call and response song (African American Spiritual).
Creating an improvised section to a song	5 th grade classes improvised in G pentatonic over the chords to "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" to create another section to the song.

Scene 1: Improvised Body Percussion and Call and Response Improvisation.

Mrs. Beasley greets the class outside of the music room door and asks the students to sit with a partner, two people to a xylophone, as they enter the room. As the class enters the music room, Mrs. Beasley's student teacher and a Fifth Grade student are still arranging the xylophones. The xylophones are arranged facing the front of the room in three rows: soprano xylophones in the front row, alto xylophones in the middle row, and one alto xylophone and bass xylophones in the back row. The students sit at the instruments while Mrs. Beasley and her student teacher pass out two mallets to each instrument group. "We don't need mallets yet," said Mrs. Beasley as she slipped on a personal microphone system.

At Mrs. Beasley's direction the class arranges their instruments in G Pentatonic, removing the C and F bars; Mrs. Beasley draws the students' attention to a poster on the wall as a reference. Mrs. Beasley keeps a steady beat by patting her legs and continues until the entire class joins her. She then pats her legs twice and claps twice to create a 4-beat ostinato as she begins to sing the African American Spiritual "Yonder Come Day."

Soon after she begins the class joins her in singing and performing the body percussion ostinato. Prior to the class entering the room, the pitches for the song were written on the white board, as dots without stems. Measures are color-coded by melodic content, and the lyrics are written above or below the pitches. Mrs. Beasley tracks the music with her hand as the class sings.

Mrs. Beasley asks the class to echo her body percussion, beginning with patting and clapping and later extending to snapping, (Figure 4.21). After a minute or so of body percussion echo Mrs. Beasley asks the class to improvise a body percussion accompaniment to the song “Yonder Come Day,” and the class improvises body percussion as they sing the song together. “Can you make your body percussion more musical?” asked Mrs. Beasley as she demonstrates a flurry of percussive body sounds that are not in relation to the beat. She asks the class to simplify their body percussion and leads the class through singing the song and improvising on body percussion again. After they conclude Mrs. Beasley asks for students to volunteer to share their body percussion improvisations as the class sings along with them.



Figure 4.21 Body Percussion Echo Examples.

Four students are chosen to share their improvisation, each one improvises for the length of one of the four lines of the song. One more time through the song with four new students improvising Mrs. Beasley remarks “Did you notice that Bobby used rhythms from the song in his improvisation and that Carol started on the steady beat and filled in the open space?” As the class performs the song with the whole class improvising again the front row improvises during the first line, the second row improvises during the second line, the third row during the third line, and the entire class improvises during the last line of the song.

Mrs. Beasley demonstrates how to play the melody, notated on the board, for the first measure of the song. Paired with their partner, one partner plays the first measure of the first three lines and while the other partner sings the complete song. The partners switch jobs and the other half of the class performs on xylophone. Next students at the xylophones play the first measure of the first three lines and the other students improvise

on body percussion in the sections that the xylophone do not play; everyone sings the song. After both partners play and improvise on body percussion the students only play the xylophone section and the teacher models an improvisation in the other sections of the song. “Did I play what you were singing?” Mrs. Beasley asks after the class finished playing. She reviews that the improvisations should be different than the melody, that you can use any of the notes in the G Pentatonic scale, but that you can play as few as one or two notes.

After acknowledging to the class that it will sound a bit chaotic, they are given one minute to practice their improvisation on the xylophone. As the students practice, Mrs. Beasley moves through the room stopping to help students and give them praise. Half of the class plays the entire song with melodic improvisation in measures two, four, six, seven, and eight while everyone plays the melody in the other sections and sings the song. Then the two groups switch roles. In order for students to improvise within the given phrase length Mrs. Beasley suggests, “If you’re thinking the song then – ‘make it up and make it up,’” (Figure 4.22). The class sings the call section “Yonder come day,” and then sings the pitches of the response using the words “make it up and make it up.”



Figure 4.22 Suggestion to keep in time during improvisation.

After both partners at the xylophone practice improvising during the song, Mrs. Beasley suggests that if they are saying to themselves “‘I can’t do this’ and ‘this is too hard’ – just use the notes G and E.” Mrs. Beasley chose two different students to model improvising using only the pitches G and E, then chose a different student to model using

only the pitches B, A, and G. “If you feel overwhelmed, just limit your notes,” added Mrs. Beasley. The next time through the song Mrs. Beasley plays the first measure of the first three lines and everyone else improvises. Some of the improvisations are performed with many different leaps, so Mrs. Beasley asks the class to play only music they can sing back and to play more scales. She asks the partners to listen to the performers and give them feedback on their improvisation for 15 seconds after they finish performing and then the partners switch jobs. Lastly, the entire class plays the first measure of the first three lines and each student in the class plays a four or eight beat melodic improvisation on the xylophone; the song repeats until everyone in the class has an opportunity to improvise.

Scene 2: Melodic Improvisation to Extend a Song. Mrs. Beasley greets the class at the door and asks them to sit in pairs at the xylophones, ensuring that there are not two new students paired together at an instrument; Mrs. Beasley explained to me during the screening interview (10/28/17) that much of the school population is transient and that the school has new students join and old student leave almost weekly. The instruments are arranged in three rows: the first row (closest to the board) are soprano xylophones, the second row are alto xylophones, and the third row are three bass xylophones. A slide is projected on the Smart Board, (Figure 4.23), as Mrs. Beasley passes out two mallets to each group at the xylophones.

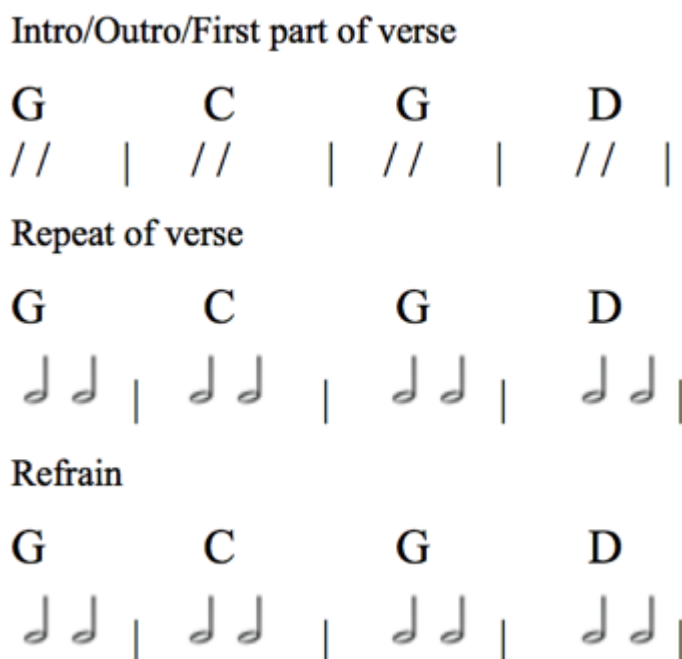


Figure 4.23 Chord changes projected on the Smart Board.

“We’re going to be combining everything that we’ve done up to now. What’s the big difference between improvising on the drum and the xylophone?” Mrs. Beasley asks the class. Mrs. Beasley calls on a student and she says, “drums have just rhythms, but the xylophone also has notes,” to delineate the difference between untuned and pitched percussion. “Today we are going to work more on improvisation,” states Mrs. Beasley, “What makes a good melody?” With the help of Mrs. Beasley, the class makes a list of qualities of a good melody that include: making a pattern, making it singable, making it memorable, using scalar patterns, and using rhythmic variation. Mrs. Beasley emphasizes that while improvisation is “making up music on the spot,” it should also be “thoughtful and musical.”

“Can you tap four G’s for me?” Mrs. Beasley asks as she begins to lead the class through playing the chord progression that is projected on the Smart Board. The students

are working in pairs at the xylophone as she asks the first group of students to play the notes C and D in different octaves. Mrs. Beasley stops the class and asks everyone to play the notes in the lower octave rather than the upper octave where some students were performing. Mrs. Beasley plays the chord progression on the piano as the class plays. Mrs. Beasley changes to playing a swing beat on a tambourine (Figure 4.24) as the second group plays. Each group is given another chance to play through the chord progression; this time as the class plays Mrs. Beasley hums the melody to the song “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.” Many of the students call out the name of the song, others hum along with Mrs. Beasley, and some begin to sing the words to the song.

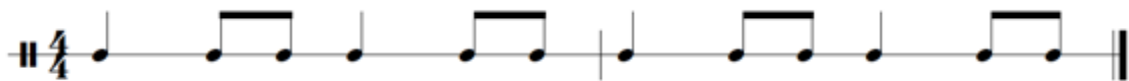


Figure 4.24 Swing beat on tambourine.

Every student at a xylophone plays as the rest of the students sing the song again. Mrs. Beasley changes the slide on the Smart Board (see Figure 4.25) and asks the class to take thirty seconds to look at the music and try to play it. She then asks the class to play as she points to the notes on the board. After both partners at each instrument play the pattern, Mrs. Beasley asks the class to also sing the “wim-o-weh’s” from the song.



Figure 4.25 Ostinato pattern for the “wim-o-weh” section.

After reminding the class not to rush the tempo, Mrs. Beasley writes the form of the song on the white board: introduction, verse 1, and lastly the ostinato pattern. As the class plays on xylophone Mrs. Beasley sings the letter names of the chords/notes and

plays a swing beat on a djembe. When the first half of the class finishes playing through the form the partners switch and the other half of the class performs. "If your partner needs help, help them," Mrs. Beasley says. She explains that the bass xylophones will play the chord progression (Figure 4.23) throughout the song and that the alto and soprano xylophones will play the ostinato pattern during the "wim-o-weh" section of the song; all of the students who are not playing and those that can sing while playing sing the song. Both partner groups take turns playing through the whole pattern of the song with the orchestration suggested by Mrs. Beasley.

As Mrs. Beasley readies the students to begin improvising she asks the class to setup their instruments in a modified G Pentatonic, referring to a poster on the wall, where they leave on the middle bar C (the bass xylophones left both C bars on their instrument) and everyone removes their F bars. "Find G, A, and B only. You're going to improvise for 8 counts on G, A, and B and end on 'do.' What key are we in?" Mrs. Beasley asks. After the students answer "G" Mrs. Beasley counts the first group off and counts aloud as she accompanies their improvisations on djembe.

The first group practices improvising three times and then Mrs. Beasley chose four individual students to share their 8-beat melodic improvisations then they switch jobs with their partner. "Why am I limiting you to only three notes?" asks Mrs. Beasley. She continues by explaining that it is easier to improvise with three pitches than with ten, and that she wants them to focus on adding rhythms and feeling the phrase length. After the second group finishes practicing improvising using the pitches G, A, and B, Mrs. Beasley tells the students they could add the pitches D and E, but to not use the C in their

improvisations yet. Each group is given the opportunity to practice improvising twice as Mrs. Beasley counts aloud and plays the djembe to accompany their improvisations.

Mrs. Beasley asks one student to play her improvisation for the class. "What did you notice about the way she played? Was it singable? Memorable? Musical?" Mrs. Beasley asks as she encourages the class to evaluate each other's improvisation through both commendation and constructive, thoughtful suggestions. After a few students perform as soloists for the class Mrs. Beasley explains the form of the song, adding in an improvised section: Intro - bass xylophones play the beginning chord progression, (Figure 4.29), through the entire song, A - after one time through the chord progression the class sings the first verse of the song, B – the alto and soprano xylophones play the ostinato patten, Figure 4.31, as the class sings the "wim-o-weh's," C – the alto xylophones improvises for the first 8 beats and then the soprano xylophones improvise for the next 8 beats, and lastly they repeat the B section and end. At the end of the performance Mrs. Beasley instructs the class to continue playing the improvised section, allowing each group an opportunity to improvise three times. When they conclude, their partner switches to play the xylophone and the class perform the piece again in the extended form.

The class ends with Mrs. Beasley reviewing the characteristics of a good improvisation and letting the class know that next class they will be adding in extra parts, performing solos, and will have an opportunity to play the melody on recorder instead of singing the song. Mrs. Beasley encourages the students who are interested in playing recorder to attempt to learn the melody by ear at home before school the next class.

Summary. In the two observed scenes of improvisation Mrs. Beasley led her classes through improvising in a familiar form, call and response, and extending a song the class was familiar with, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.” The use of the familiar song, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight,” helped the students when they improvised by giving them a reference for the style and a familiar phrase length. Mrs. Beasley developed students’ improvisations by arranging the class for easy differentiation, reviewing qualities of a good melody, limiting their pitch sets, and modeling each step that the students were expected to take. Each step along the way was intentional and deliberately taken to move the students immediately forward in their performance of the piece or in adding to their improvisation. The students in her classes appeared comfortable performing and improvising both as a class and individually when asked to perform as a soloist.

Mr. Parris

Mr. Parris is in his 21st year of teaching, with 16 years of those years at Rebecca Nurse Elementary School. Mr. Parris describes “the concept of the deep connection between music and that [movement]” as the factor that “brought [him] to the Schulwerk” (interview, 11/10/17). As a performing musician, Mr. Parris had very little experience and no formal training in improvisation prior to teaching; he has been using the Orff approach for 14 years. Mr. Parris was very soft-spoken and exudes a relaxed personality - from his visible tattoos, to his relaxed attire, to his interactions with his students.

Rebecca Nurse Elementary School. The Rebecca Nurse Elementary School is located in a historic suburb of a major city, with a population of approximately 673,000 people. The area is a unique blend of a small wooded community and coastal town; the school is approximately five miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Built in the 1950s the school

was renovated in the 1990s. It is a Kindergarten through Fifth Grade elementary school of 374 students. The school is 80% Caucasian, 7% Latino, 4% African-American, 4% Asian, and 5% multi-race according to the state's district report card. At Rebecca Nurse Elementary School Kindergarten through Second Grade have music class twice a week for 30 minutes and the students in Third through Fifth Grade have music once a week for 65 minutes.

Rebecca Nurse Elementary School is located at the bottom of a hill flanked by historic landmarks – a historic church at the top of the hill and a memorial site about a block down from the school in the other direction. There was a small parking lot to the right of the school and a driveway that loops in front of the main entrance to the school. The music room was on the left as you enter the building across from the main office. The room was a trapezoid shape with the door to the room in the back left corner of a short wall. The front of the room was the shortest in length with a teacher's desk, a Smart Board, and an upright piano. A full set of barred percussion instruments were setup in the back of the room, on the right as you walk into the room, and the right wall had shelves and a counter top that contain a set of hand chimes and hand drums with windows above them. The left side of the room featured a desk for the band teacher, bookcases of books, tubanos, a guitar, and a dulcimer with small windows high at the top of the wall. Behind the barred instruments in the back of the room was a countertop with a refrigerator, sink, and a bathroom.

Scenes of Improvisation. The Third through Fifth Grade students at Rebecca Nurse Elementary School engaged in many different improvisational activities during my two-day visit to their school. The improvisation activities fell into four different

categories: 1. Rhythmic improvisation, 2. Melodic improvisation, 3. Movement improvisation, and 4. Pre-compositional improvisation, (Figure 4.8). In the sections to follow I will describe two scenes of improvisation activities that I observed Mr. Parris and his students engaged in during my two-day visit. The first scene follows a Fifth Grade class as they improvise a rhythmic improvisation using body percussion in the familiar musical structure ABAC, and the second scene follows a Fourth Grade class as they explore a melodic improvisation, in F pentatonic, making one small change at a time on barred percussion instruments to create a new section for the folk song “Alabama Gal.”

Table 4.8

Improvisational Activities Observed in Mr. Parris's Classroom.

Improvisation Category and Form	Description
<i>Rhythmic Improvisation</i>	
ABAC body percussion improvisation	5 th grade classes created a ABAC, each section lasting four beats, body percussion improvisation in small groups.
Word-chaining inspired by a poem	3 rd grade classes named landmarks in a nearby city to use as rhythmic inspiration for improvisation through speech.
<i>Melodic Improvisation</i>	
Word-chaining inspired by a poem	3 rd grade classes named landmarks in a nearby city to use as inspiration for rhythmic improvisation that was later transferred to melodic improvisations in C pentatonic on xylophones.
Creating a B section for a previously learned song	5 th grade classes created a B section for a previously learned song using target pitches in a small ABAC form on xylophones. 4 th grade classes created a B section for a previously learned folk song using target pitches and the rhythm of the melody in a ABAC form on xylophones.
<i>Movement Improvisation</i>	
Creating a folk dance to accompany a folk song	3 rd grade classes created a folk dance to accompany a folk song choosing standard folk dance movements to represent each phrase of the folk song.
<i>Pre-compositional Improvisation</i>	
Creating a B section for a previously learned song	4 th grade classes created a B section for a previously learned folk song using target pitches and the rhythm of the melody in a ABAC form on xylophones improvising until finding something they liked.

Scene 1: Rhythmic improvisation using body percussion. Mr. Parris met the Fifth Grade class at the door, they walk quietly into the room, and sit in assigned seats, in a circle, on the large carpet in the middle of the room. The class begins clapping and saying rhythm syllables for four-beat rhythms found on flash cards held up by Mr. Parris, (Figure 4.26). As the class performs the rhythms a second time, Mr. Parris asks the class to clap the rhythms on the cards without saying the rhythm syllables; the class also pats the rhythms, and again claps the rhythms while saying the rhythm syllables.

Card A



Card B



Card C



Figure 4.26 Rhythms on flash cards.

Two students are chosen to come to the front of the room and hold up a rhythm card specifically Cards B and C while Mr. Parris holds Card A. The class claps the string of cards in a row; once the class completes performing the card Mr. Parris is holding he moves in between the two students so that his card is performed again. “What is the form?” Mr. Parris asks the class. “It’s ABAC,” quickly replies a student. Mr. Parris chooses a student to take his place to hold up the A section rhythm, and he leads the class in performing the rhythms on all four levels of body percussion (snapping, clapping, patting, and stomping).

The class divides into groups of three to four students each and the groups begin creating an ABAC body percussion improvisation. “You will have only five minutes – this is a quick challenge – don’t make it too complicated;” Mr. Parris sets a timer on the Smart Board for five minutes. Mr. Parris reminds the class that the A sections should be identical and that the B and C sections should be different, and to use only the rhythms quarter note, quarter rest, and two-beamed eighth notes with multiple levels of body percussion (snap, clap, pat, and/or stomp). Each group shares their improvisation with Mr. Parris as he moves through the room from group to group.

When the timer signals that the five minutes have concluded, it is reset for three minutes and Mr. Parris says, “Make it better, and make sure everyone in the group can play it.” He reminds the class “Create one rhythmic pattern for A, come up with something different for B, the same thing again for the A, add something new again.” All of the groups perform their improvisation at the same time before Mr. Parris gives them another 30 seconds to refine their performance. Then Mr. Parris travels through the room listening to each group and asks them to sit after they perform for him.

Mr. Parris explains that they will perform their improvisations in rondo form - with the chant “Simple Simon” (Orff & Keetman, 1959, pp. 42-43) as the A section. Each group’s ABAC body percussion improvisations create the B, C, D, etc. sections of the rondo (ABACADAE, etc.). The class performs “Simple Simon,” the A section, together and then each of their body percussion pieces with the rhythm syllables for the rhythms as the B, C, D, etc.; after each group performs they sit down until the entire class is seated on the floor.

Scene 2: Melodic improvisation in F pentatonic inspired by the folk song

“Alabama Gal.” Mr. Parris meets the Fourth Grade Class at the door and the class quietly walks in and sits in their assigned seats in a circle on the carpet in the center of the room. The class begins with students echoing four-beat solfege patterns sung by Mr. Parris, and then continues by leading the class in singing the folk song “Alabama Gal” while playing an accompaniment on the piano. After singing the song a second time, the students stand in a longways set⁴ and sing the folk song and dance the dance that accompanies the song, while the teacher continues to accompany on the piano. The class performs the dance a few times then sits back down in a circle.

Mr. Parris asks the class to sing “Alabama Gal” again while patting their legs to denote the phrases of the song. He leads the class in patting their right leg on the first phrase, their left leg on the second phrase, their right leg again for the third phrase, and clapping during the words “Alabama Gal.” Mr. Parris counts the students down the line and asks the students to sit at the barred instruments in the back of the class that corresponded to their number; the instruments are already arranged in F Pentatonic with the B and E bars removed. “What is the home tone?” Mr. Parris asks and a student replies that the home tone is F. Mr. Parris leads the students in playing the rhythms of the first phrase on the note F, the second phrase on the notes C or D, the third phrase on the note F again, and the fourth phrase on A, see Figure 4.27.

⁴ A folk dance formation where partners stand across from each other forming two long lines, shoulder to shoulder with partners next to them.



Figure 4.27 “Alabama Gal” target pitches on barred instruments.

The class plays the pattern a few times and then Mr. Parris asks the students “should it end on the home tone F?” After they answer yes, Mr. Parris plays different examples starting on an A in the last phrase and ending on the home tone F, (Figure 4.28). Students are given the opportunity to try different combinations of pitches in the last phrase. As the students explore possible pitch choices, Mr. Parris encourages them to “try something different.” Mr. Parris asks for volunteers to share their improvisation; four students volunteer and take turns sharing. After each student performed Mr. Parris makes comments, such as, “I like how you walked by step” and “I noticed that you took a leap, but then moved by step.” After students share their ideas the class plays the entire ABAC pattern together with their new patterns in the C section.



Figure 4.28 Mr. Parris's examples of the last phrase of "Alabama Gal" improvisation.

Next the class makes changes to the B section. Mr. Parris asks them to use mostly the lower pitches C, D, or F. The students keep the A sections on the single note F while they practice their new B and C sections. The class plays through the piece three times, making changes each time to the B and C sections. Then Mr. Parris says, "now walk a little on the F sections," encouraging the students to use more notes than just the F. Each time the students play through the piece Mr. Parris encourages them to make small changes to the new sections. A student asks, "Do the two patterns have to be the same?"; referring to the A sections. "You're a step ahead of me," replies Mr. Parris, "Right now they don't have to be, but we want to eventually remember what we did in the F section and play it again."

The class plays through the pattern another time before Mr. Parris says, "This time did you make the two sections the same? This time try to make the two F sections the same." After practicing as a class Mr. Parris asks if anyone wants to share their improvisations – eight students share their improvisations. "If you feel like you made a mistake just keep playing – it's an improvisation, no one knows what you wanted to play

so keep playing,” encourages Mr. Parris. After students share their ABAC improvisations the class performs their improvisations together one more time.

Summary. Mr. Parris’s approach to teaching improvisation can be characterized by four elements: improvising in musical structures that are familiar to students, allowing students time to practice and refine their musical thoughts, restricting improvisation to one small change at a time, and continually using positive redirection and encouragement. The sections to follow will discuss each of the four elements of that characterize Mr. Parris’s approach.

The first element that distinguished Mr. Parris’s improvisation instruction was the use of musical structures that were familiar to the students. In the first scene the classes performed rhythms in the same ABAC form, as they would later create in their improvisation, and in the second scene the classes performed the folk song, “Alabama Gal,” that the improvisation would later be based on.

The second element was an important, but sometimes overlooked, step in students’ development as improvisers – time to practice. Mr. Parris’s classes were given ample time to practice, make changes to, and refine their improvisations in groups and individually. In the first scene, Fifth Grade students worked in groups of four within a given timeframe, five minutes, to create their group improvisations. In addition to the initial five minutes of group improvisation planning, the students were given two other periods of time for practice and refinement. This extra time was important for students who may need more time to process or just need one more chance to practice the rhythmic pattern before sharing with the class.

The third element of Mr. Parris's improvisation instruction were the ideas of "making a small change" and "how can we make this better" that come from the implementation of Mr. Parris's district's work in teaching and evaluating creativity. The students were taught that "make a small change" means to change one element of their composition or improvisation, example: changing a rhythm on one beat or changing one pitch in a melody. The students were taught about elements of the creative process and use a posted checklist in their room as a reference, (Figure 4.29).

Creative Process Checklist

Prepare

- ☐ I know what the goal is for this activity.
- ☐ I know what tools I need and how to use them.

Experiment

- ☐ Based on the goal, I tested different ideas without worrying about mistakes.
- ☐ I kept track of my favorite ideas that fit the goal.
- ☐ I explored ways to make those ideas even better and more interesting.

Organize

- ☐ I organized my ideas to fit the goal.
- ☐ I used the tools I needed for this activity.

Surprise

- ☐ I included at least one idea that makes my creation unique.
- ☐ I used familiar tools in a new or unexpected way.
- ☐ I included a surprise for the audience.

Reflect

- ☐ Did I achieve the goal?
- ☐ Did I challenge myself to take risks and try something new?
- ☐ Do I like my creation? If not, do I need to experiment more?

Figure 4.29 Creative Process Checklist.

The last element was the continual use of positive redirection and encouragement during improvisation activities. While Fifth Grade students worked on their improvisations Mr. Parris gently redirected students who were using incorrect rhythms or

did not perform the A section the same both times, and also gave compliments and encouragement to groups that performed flawlessly. My perception was that everyone in the class was engaged, due to their focused work in their groups and they responded positively to Mr. Parris's compliments and critiques. Mr. Parris had cultivated a culture in his classroom that encouraged students to volunteer without fear. No student was forced to share his/her improvisation; however, they willingly volunteered.

Cross-Case Findings

The previous section presented an introduction to each teacher, their teaching environments, and two scenes of improvisation, along with a discussion of the within-case themes found in each of the six cases. This section examines the findings in cross-case analysis. The first section discusses cross-case findings focused on the sequence of improvisation from rhythmic to melodic activities. The next sections discuss the cross-case findings related to the use of authentic improvisational musical structures, limiting improvisational choices, the process of changing one beat at a time, musical materials used (pieces and songs) to engage students in improvisation, and the use of differentiation to maximize engagement and student success.

Improvisation Instruction

One goal of this dissertation is to find the methods and techniques of instruction expert Orff Schulwerk teachers use to teach improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms. The cross-case themes relating to improvisation instruction include: the sequence of improvisation instruction, the use of authentic improvisational musical structures, limiting improvisational choices, and the process of

changing one beat at a time. All of the teacher participants used these approaches to teach improvisation in their classrooms.

Sequence of Improvisation. One of the common themes across all of the six cases is the sequencing of improvisational activities. The sequence observed or discussed with each of the teachers includes moving from speech or movement, to body percussion, then to rhythmic improvisation, and finally to melodic improvisation. A teacher may choose to begin on a specific step in the sequence, for instance rhythmic improvisation, and move forward from that step. The goal is not always melodic improvisation; in some cases the end of the sequence may be rhythmic improvisation. Sequencing of improvisation can be seen in all of the six participants' scenes above. Below, I provide three examples of improvisation sequencing drawn from my observations of Mrs. Tommie, Mr. Braun, and Mr. Gonzalez.

A good illustration of sequencing improvisation is an activity led by Mrs. Tommie with her Fourth Grade Class. Mrs. Tommie plays an E on the piano and asks her students to point to the front of the room. She then plays an A on the piano and directs students to point to their left and, lastly, Mrs. Tommie plays a B on the piano and tells her students to point to their right. The students are led through walking in the directions that they had just pointed in the following sequence: eight steps forward, eight steps to the left, four steps to the right, four steps to the left again, and eight steps backwards. The students break into pairs and echo Mrs. Tommie as she says, "E, E, then go all the way down," Mrs. Tommie snaps her fingers twice and tells her students to "shimmy down like the twist, and clap at the bottom." Mrs. Tommie demonstrates and her students follow her

lead. Mrs. Tommie says “E, E, then go all the way up,” repeating the process, this time from the squatting position to standing; her students follow her direction.

Mrs. Tommie asks her students to find a partner and they practice clapping an eight-beat question and answer rhythmic improvisation. The students are reminded to “borrow something from the question for your answer.” As the students practice, the partner not performing rhythms counts to eight aloud to help their partner improvise in an eight-beat phrase. Mrs. Tommie asks the students to “make sure you perform clear rhythms for your partner.” The student partner groups take turns performing the question and the answer. The students add the question and answer rhythmic improvisation to the piece Mrs. Tommie taught them earlier and they perform it in an ABA form, where the A section is the “E, E, then go all the way down” and back up again, and the B section is a question and answer improvisation where each partner performs a round of the question and answer.

After the class performs the piece in ABA form they sit around a xylophone on the floor as Mrs. Tommie demonstrates how to play a blues scale, see Figure 4.7 in the previous section. Mrs. Tommie tells her students that the home tone is E, discusses upper and lower neighbor tones, and passing tones, then asks them to move to a xylophone with their partner. The xylophones are setup so that each student is facing their partner. Mrs. Tommie asks the students to “take a new rhythm and move it around on the xylophone,” using neighbor tones and passing tones. “Find the thing that catches your ear about your partner’s,” Mrs. Tommie suggests as a way to find a rhythmic and melodic motif to replicate in their answer of the question and answer improvisations.

The students practice performing the A section on xylophone, composed by Mrs. Tommie, see Figure 4.7 from the previous section. Mrs. Tommie directs the bass xylophones to play the roots of the chords in the chord progression written on the white board, see Figure 4.30, as quarter notes in a steady beat, as the rest of the class performs the piece, again in ABA form, but now on xylophone. When the class finishes performing Mrs. Tommie asks individual students to perform an eight-bar solo as she plays a swing beat on the drum set and the bass xylophones continue to perform the roots of the chord progression. The class performs the piece again, but in rondo form, where everyone in the class performs the teacher-composed A section and individual students improvise for the B, C, D, etc. sections.



Figure 4.30 Chord Progression Played by the Bass Xylophones.

Another example of the sequence of activities used to foster musical improvisation can be found in Mr. Braun's second scene of improvisation in the With-in Case section above. In this example Mr. Braun's Sixth Grade Class begins with a single pitch for each musical phrase and they begin with a focus on rhythm. The class quickly moved from patting a steady beat on their leg for each beat in the phrase to expand their melodic choices outward until they had a more complete melodic improvisation.

Mr. Gonzalez's Fifth Grade Class, from his second scene of improvisation in the With-in Case section above, provide another example similar to Mr. Braun's class. In Mr. Gonzalez's class they previously learned the song "Mrs. Hen" from James Harding's book *From Wibbleton to Wobbleton* (2013, pp. 154-155) on the xylophone. They now worked in pairs echoing Mr. Gonzalez's body percussion patterns, shown at different levels to represent different pitches to be played. After learning these drone accompaniments the students were then led through melodic improvisations using different pitches in the C Pentatonic scale.

The above scenes show different example of how the teachers use a sequence of activities to foster musical improvisation in their students. In the examples Mrs. Tommie begins with movement and leads her students through body percussion and rhythmic improvisation, and eventually guides them to melodic improvisation, Mr. Braun begins with a steady beat on a single pitch and then led his students to more expanded melodic choices for their improvisations, while Mr. Gonzalez uses body percussion to teach drone accompaniments to melodic improvisations in his Fifth Grade class that eventually lead to more complex melodic improvisations on the xylophone. This concept of sequencing improvisation was used by all six of the participants in a variety of ways.

Authentic Musical Structures. The next cross-case theme is the use of authentic musical structures used to engage students in musical improvisations. From free improvisation to improvisations in rondo form to improvisation within a 12-Bar Blues pattern each teacher guided students to improvise within an authentic musical structure. Authentic musical structures are those, such as ABA form, that exist within the composed music of a particular music genre or tradition. Guild Keetman, in her book *Elementaria*:

First Acquaintance with Orff Schulwerk (1974), suggests that echoing and call and response is the easiest way for children to learn to improvise. The use of these authentic musical structures suggests that the participant teachers are attempting to construct improvisation activities that authentically represent “real life” musical experiences. Examples of the use of authentic musical structures can be found in Mr. Andrews’s Fifth Grade Class, Mrs. Tommie’s Fifth Grade Class, and discussed in an interview with Mrs. Beasley.

Mr. Andrews, as noted in the earlier section, created a lesson where students improvised blues solos over a 12-Bar Blues pattern. There was a clear process for student learning that began with modeling for the students, then students echoing the teacher, and lastly the students applying the new rhythms and rhythmic feel to their improvisation. There were clear guidelines throughout the activity for the improvisation that, as students became more proficient, were loosened to allow more choices by the performer.

As the students begin to construct their blues solos, they are able to reference all of the notes in the chord progression through a chart on the Smart Board. Mr. Andrews asks the students to choose only one note per chord to play. The class first performs their chosen note for each chord as a whole note, to hear the quality of the chord. To hear the music phrase they then added rhythmic variance, first modeled by Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews encourages students to change their notes throughout the course of the class. The class uses a worksheet, that provides the same chords and note choices as the slide on the projector, to plan their improvisation before performing. The class performs the piece in the same way that jazz combos perform pieces, beginning with the melody of the

song *C Jam Blues* as the A, improvised solos in the B section, and ending the piece with the melody creating an ABA ternary form.

Another example, again from Mr. Andrews, of using authentic musical structures was in his second scene from the earlier section where he developed an engaging lesson that allowed students to improvise an ostinato to be performed with a composition comprised of layered ostinati. Mr. Andrews tells the class to begin their ostinati with the tonic note, E, and to incorporate the fifth, B; otherwise the students can use any of the pitches in the E Dorian scale that was projected on to the Smart Board. While the rhythmic and melodic choices are written on whiteboards for the students to reference, many students improvise changes to what they wrote as they perform them. Mr. Andrews refers to this type of improvisation as “pre-compositional improvisation.”

In one of the scenes from above, Mrs. Tommie’s Fifth Grade Class used the call and response structure, modeled in the work song “Old House” to improvise on the recorder. The students improvised a four-beat melodic pattern, using only the pitches G and E and then expanding to the pitches A and B. The improvisation occurred in the call section and the response section remained the same throughout, as in the example song “Old House.”

Mrs. Beasley discusses using the call and response structure with older students in her school during her second interview, “They might play a little phrase and then the second person answers back with something different. And then gradually over time the challenge is to make your answer match the question in some way; the musical material that is in the person’s question” (Second Interview, 4/29/18). Using the African American

Spiritual “Yonder Come Day” as their inspiration, Mrs. Beasley’s Fourth Grade Class improvised a call and response improvisation on xylophones in G Pentatonic.

These examples of authentic musical structures: the 12-Bar Blues, layered ostinati, and call and response, are just a few of the musical structures that the teachers use when instructing students in improvisation. Each of the teachers are able to have their students extend pieces that they had previously learned by adding sections for student creativity through improvisation. Using authentic musical structures allow students to see and perform examples that occur in known and learned songs, and allow them to create their own versions of these songs with the addition of their improvisations.

Limiting Improvisational Choices. All of the teacher-participants observed in this study approach improvisation by using target pitches and/or limited pitch sets to teach their students to improvise melodically. When using target pitches, students are given specific pitches that need to be played in specific measures on specific beats as they explore other pitches on the xylophone or recorder. Some examples of the use of target pitches are illustrated through scenes observed in the classrooms of Mr. Parris and Mrs. Tommie.

Mr. Parris limits the pitch set for melodic improvisation to allow students to focus on rhythmic variance and musical phrase length. In the second scene of improvisation from the previous section, Mr. Parris encourages his students to use other notes in the first phrase, but asks them to end on the tonic pitch – this gives the class the freedom to make melodic and rhythmic choices while maintaining the tonality. Mr. Parris moves systematically through taking away restrictions in the students’ improvisations balanced with time for the students to explore the possibilities of the new options that they are able

to use. The students are encouraged to make small changes and to try new things in their playing each time they play through a section. By making changes to one phrase at a time the piece becomes more manageable, keeps the students from becoming overwhelmed, and gradually builds their improvisation skills.

Students are often given few choices in the beginning and, as they progress, are given more freedom to choose more pitches and/or rhythms. Mrs. Tommie scaffolds the pitch choices of her students, beginning with a smaller pitch set at first– “The box is a little smaller when they first start. I do a few pitches and I expand it outward each time and then by the end of Fifth and beginning of Sixth grade they do it with harmonic function” (interview, 10/26/17). In Mrs. Tommie’s second scene of improvisation, she restricts pitch choices to only G and E to encourage students to focus solely on rhythmic improvisation. Then after a long period of practicing rhythmic improvisation alone the students add pitches to their improvisation. Limiting the choices that students have prevents the students from becoming overwhelmed by too many choices and helps them focus on specific elements of improvisation (Solomon, 2000; Stamou, 2001).

When students show early signs of success they are recognized and Mrs. Tommie asks them to add pitches sooner than the rest of the class. Students who struggle to create a clear rhythmic pattern on a single pitch are asked to play again and are given more opportunities to practice than their more successful peers. In my conversation with Mrs. Tommie after the class concludes she told me that she acknowledges students who perform more than once by saying, “some do it again so they’re not off the hook and some are good models and I want to have them play for the other students.”

In another activity, Mrs. Tommie's Sixth Grade classes performed the American Folk Song "Old Joe Clark" on dulcimer. Mrs. Tommie provided a recording of the song for students to listen to and inspire their strumming patterns. After they learned the chords and practiced switching between the different chords they were able to improvise their strumming pattern. They were limited to just improvising the strumming pattern as they still needed to perform within the chord structure of the folk song.

Each of the teachers use some form of restriction of choices in their improvisation instruction to allow their students to improvise with a purpose and not overwhelm them with too many options. As the students become more experienced with improvising within the set limitations, new options are presented, giving them greater freedom and more choices in their improvisations.

Changing One Beat at a Time. Taking the idea of limiting improvisation one step further many of the teachers allow their students to make only one change at a time to their improvisations. Two examples of this can be found in scenes of improvisation in the classrooms of Mr. Braun and Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Braun's classes changed one rhythm at a time on a Promethean Board, while Mr. Gonzalez's classes made one change during a movement improvisation.

In the first scene of improvisation, from the previous section, Mr. Braun's students begin by changing one beat, making three quarter notes and two eighth in the four beats of the first line of rhythms. After giving students an opportunity to practice different variations of their rhythms Mr. Braun directs the class to manipulate rhythms on the Promethean Board. The interactive board allows the students to easily notate their

rhythmic improvisation in a clear manner for the class to perform them, and to change the rhythmic pattern easily by dragging new rhythms on top of the old ones.

Multiple students are given the opportunity to share their four-beat rhythms, allowing the class to see multiple models and perform each other's rhythms. Only after students create many variations of the rhythms and perform each variation does Mr. Braun challenge them to add in the four-sixteenth-note rhythm. In conversation with Mr. Braun after his classes, he remarked that he made the decision not to teach a rhythm syllable system and instead to just use words, such as "alligator," to represent rhythms in music class. He feels that teaching a rhythm syllable system is like learning a new language and takes time that could be used to create music, so he chooses to use words the children already know.

Mr. Gonzalez's improvisation instruction features a layering of small instructions and directions for students to add elements to their improvisations. While Mr. Gonzalez chose the gestures or movements that the students in his third grade classes have to incorporate into their bodies as they move, the students decide when to do the required movements within the 15-beat structure. These parameters are no different than restricting students' use of rhythms or the pitch set that they may use while improvising.

The examples from Mr. Braun and Mr. Gonzalez's classes show how teachers use very restrictive choices can still allow for student creativity. Similar to the previous section, these limitations are eventually lifted and students are given more freedom of choice as they explore the possibilities within the structure of their improvisation.

Musical Materials Used to Engage Students

While each of the participants in this study are AOSA-approved Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators there are many different entry points and musical examples that these teachers use to engage their students in improvisation. This section discusses the cross-case themes of musical materials used and how the teachers used the musical material to inspire improvisation. Each teacher uses a diverse selection of musical materials/songs, and these materials can be found in Table 4.9. As noted in Table 4.9 all participants rely on the Orff Schulwerk volumes, but also use a variety of supplemental materials in their goal of cultivating improvisational skills in their students.

Table 4.9

Musical Material/Songs Each Teacher Uses to Teach Improvisation (Observed or Mentioned in an Interview)

Musical Source/Song	Teachers Who Use Them
Orff Schulwerk <i>Music for Children Volumes</i> (Volumes 1-5)	All Teachers
Orff Schulwerk Supplemental Materials (<i>Rhythmische Übung, Este Spiel am Xylophon</i> , etc.)	Mrs. Tommie, Mr. Andrews
Folk Songs (American and multi-cultural, outside of the Orff Schulwerk volumes)	All Teachers
Teacher Created Songs/Material	All Teachers
Materials Created by Other Teachers	All Teachers
Jazz/Blues Songs	Mr. Braun, Mrs. Tommie, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gonzalez, Mrs. Beasley
Poems	All Teachers

In AOSA-approved Orff Schulwerk level courses the Margaret Murray English editions of the *Music for Children* volumes are used, which are adapted to include mostly English folk songs replacing the original German folk songs. Thus, each teacher in this study was trained using these volumes. All six teachers use a balance of multi-cultural

folk music, poems, the *Music for Children* volumes and Orff supplemental material, and music written for students by themselves and other Orff Schulwerk teachers. For example, Mr. Braun's Third Grade class, in his first scene of improvisation, used a piece from *Music for Children Volume I: Pentatonic* (Orff & Keetman, 1958) as a starting point for improvisation. Mr. Andrews, Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Parris, and Mrs. Tommie all said in their screening interviews that they use the *Music for Children* volumes to teach improvisation. Additionally, Mr. Andrews mentioned that he draws material from Orff Supplemental materials, specifically *Rhythmische Übung* (Keetman, 1970) and *Erstes Spiel am Xylophon* (Keetman, 1969).

The common thread that binds all of the musical material as it relates to improvisation instruction is the use of elemental music and structures in both examples and for students to manipulate in composition and improvisation. Carl Orff used the term "elemental music" to describe the music of Orff Schulwerk. Steven Calantropio, former Education Director for AOSA, defined elemental music in his book *Pieces and Processes* (2006):

The term implies a genre of music that is drawn from the basic elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and form. It is music stripped of intellectual complexities, closely related to speech and movement, and draws its inspirations from those human impulses that are common to all people (p. 3).

The majority of folk and popular music is written in an elemental style and lends itself as good examples of a defined set of pitches and rhythms, as well as form, that can be used as a starting point for improvisation. Mrs. Beasley's Fifth Grade class, from her second scene of improvisation, is one example of how teachers can use popular music as a jumping off point to engage their students in improvisation.

While Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Parris, and Mrs. Tommie were the only teachers observed using American folk songs as the starting point for improvisation activities, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Gonzalez were observed using multi-cultural songs to engage students in improvisation. While not observed, all of the teachers in this study report using American or multi-cultural folk songs to teach concepts and engage students in composition and improvisation activities.

In addition to Orff Schulwerk materials and folk songs, both American and multi-cultural, all of the teachers used materials written by other Orff Schulwerk teachers that they learned from workshops, the AOSA National Conference, or from separate publications. "One of the books that I use a lot is Patrick Ware's *Here's Two*." Mrs. Beasley explained in her screening interview (10/28/20017). "That just happens to be a piece that I've started using almost annually. The kids and I love the harmonies in it, and I love the simplicity of the way it's structured." Similarly, Mr. Gonzalez explained in his interview that he uses the materials of Doug Goodkin, James Harding, and Sofia Lopez-Ibor as much as the volumes (11/14/2017). These additional materials used vary by teacher, often based on the specific workshops they attended in the past, but all of these materials are developed by Orff Schulwerk teachers or with the Orff process in mind as they were developed.

While each of the AOSA-approved Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators in this study used different entry points and musical examples they all approach improvisation in a similar way. Each of the teachers use original Orff Schulwerk material written by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, folk songs, and pieces they and other Orff educators have written with their students to inspire improvisation. The musical material used with

students can be chosen for many different reasons: a concept found within the song, it is required within their curriculum, the teacher's personal preference, or because of the example structure that it provides for composition or improvisation.

Differentiation to Maximize Engagement and Student Success

The Orff Schulwerk approach naturally differentiates through its scaffolding of concepts and performance skills that move from very simplistic to complex. In addition to the natural differentiation that occurs in the Orff process the expert teachers in this study used other differentiation techniques to maximize engagement and ensure student success. Some of the ways the teachers in this study differentiated instruction include: pairing students of differing abilities together so that they can help each other, performing on different instruments to assist students in keeping a steady beat during practice and performance, limiting pitch choices to help students from becoming overwhelmed by too many choices during improvisation, and modeling xylophone parts for students with the instrument upside down so that the bars are facing the students in the same way that the students see the instrument in front of themselves.

Pairing students of varied abilities and experiences together allows students to work together cooperatively. The student of lower ability and/or experience can see a more competent model and learn from a peer, while the more competent student gains confidence through helping a peer. Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Braun, and Mrs. Tommie were all observed using this strategy of pairing students of differing abilities during this study.

Inexperienced musicians often have a difficult time keeping a steady beat, especially when performing music in the moment. One strategy to assist students is the teacher performing on varied instruments to assist in keeping a steady beat during

practices and performances. Mr. Gonzalez kept a steady beat on the temple blocks, while Mrs. Beasley used the piano, tambourine, and cajon to assist students in maintaining a steady beat. Mrs. Tommie was observed playing a swing rhythm on the drum set during a blues improvisation and added a rhythm to signal when the phrase ended and the next soloist was to begin their improvisation.

While the limiting of pitch choices is an improvisation instruction strategy, it is also a differentiation strategy. Limiting the students' choice of pitches in an improvisation helps students from becoming overwhelmed by too many choices during an improvisation. As students feel more comfortable more pitch and rhythm options can become available to them, while their peers that are still developing skills can remain at the level with less options. This allows all of the students to participate in the same song or piece of music while appropriately challenging them based on their current ability. This strategy was used by all of the participants in the study.

The last strategy observed used by the teacher participants is modeling xylophone parts and improvisations for students with the teacher instrument upside down. Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Braun, and Mrs. Tommie used this strategy to make it easier for struggling students to see their examples from their playing perspective. When the teacher plays upside down facing the students the bars of the xylophone are in the same order that the students see the bars in front of themselves. For students with visual processing challenges, this technique can help them be more successful because they are not required to mentally reverse everything the teacher did in her/his example.

The process approach to teaching in Orff Schulwerk naturally differentiates instruction for students. In addition to the process approach to teaching the teachers in

this study used four differentiation strategies: 1. pairing students of differing abilities together so that they can help each other, 2. performing on different instruments to assist students in keeping a steady beat during practice and performance, 3. limiting pitch choices to help students from becoming overwhelmed by too many choices during improvisation, and 4. modeling xylophone parts for students with the instrument upside down so that the bars are facing the students in the same way that the students see the instrument in front of themselves. Each of these strategies works in different ways for students who have a variety of needs in the process of improvisation instruction. The four strategies above, while effective, are not the only strategies used to differentiate instruction during improvisation instruction, but do give a lens into what are used by these expert teachers.

Conclusion

In the within-case section, I introduced each of the participants and highlighted their practice through scenes of improvisation. Although all of the participants are Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators and consequently have similar practices, some differences that are highlighted in the within-case themes include: 1. various musical and visual artistic works used as inspiration for improvisation such as a painting, African American Spirituals, folk songs, and a minimalist composition; 2. numerous styles of improvisation found in differing forms to include ABA, 12-bar blues, melodic ostinato, and rondo form; and 3. different kinds of improvisation that used various music media (movement, body percussion, untuned percussion, recorder, xylophone) that students experienced within a particular class period. Each of the participants use a variety of tools and strategies in the

themes above and spoke about them in interviews or were observed using them with their students.

Each of the six teachers in this study is unique and teaches in widely different schools with diverse student populations, but each is also an AOSA-certified teacher-educator. While they were observed teaching different improvisation activities and had their own unique teaching style, they also shared many common threads, which were examined in the cross-case themes that emerged from analysis during the course of the study. These teachers share in common: 1. the use of authentic improvisational musical structures in improvisation, 2. restriction of improvisational choices, 3. changing only one beat at a time during improvisation, 4. selection of musical materials used (pieces and songs) to engage students in improvisation, and 5. the use of differentiation to maximize engagement and student success.

The Orff Schulwerk approach is rooted in improvisation and all of the participants were found to be true to the philosophy as they reported beginning improvisation instruction with the youngest students that they teach and continuing to add to their students' skills and abilities, as they grow older. In the next chapter, I will discuss the broader themes of this study related to the teaching of improvisation in Orff Schulwerk and connect these themes to the research questions.

Chapter V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this multi-case study was to identify how expert Orff Schulwerk teachers teach improvisation to their upper elementary (3rd-6th Grade) school students in the general music classroom. The study focused on the teaching activities used, and situations created, by these teachers to encourage creative musical improvisations, the materials, musical and otherwise, these experts use to foster improvisation, and differentiation strategies used to assist students during improvisation. This chapter will discuss the interpretation of the data of this study, acknowledge and discuss the limitations of this study, examine implications for the field of music education, and suggest recommendations for future research that can help answer questions that this study uncovered or was unable to answer.

Born from the New German Dance movement in 1920s Germany, the Orff Schulwerk approach combines movement and dance with music instruction, through improvisation (Hepburn, 2011; Kugler, 2013). The music instruction at the Günther-Schule was created as a way to encourage dancers to accompany themselves, and others, with music as they danced, and to inspire movement through their musical improvisations. From the Günther-Schule, the music instruction was adapted for use with children with the intent to preserve the spirit of improvisation and self-expression. The important findings in this study, as they relate to improvisation, fit into three distinct areas: the materials and structures used to teach improvisation, the differentiation of improvisation instruction, and an ontogenetic approach to teaching improvisation.

Table 4.1 in Chapter IV presents the definitions of improvisation given by each of the participant-teachers; a mutually agreed upon definition of improvisation is not

concluded or otherwise suggested from their definitions. During this study, participants were not given a definition of improvisation, but rather their responses about improvisation were drawn from their own definitions. For the sake of clarity, I offer my definition of improvisation as a reference for the forthcoming interpretations and conclusions: *improvisation* is spontaneous performance, without scripted preparation, that is governed by the rules of the musical structure within which they are working. Using this definition, I interpret some forms planned improvisation and pre-compositional improvisation as composition activities rather than improvisation activities. However, it is important to note that all data reported as improvisation in Chapter 4 was identified by the given participant as a form of improvisation. While some of these activities do not meet my personal definition of improvisation, they are presented herein for the interpretation of the reader.

Materials/Structures Used to Teach Improvisation

Music teachers, regardless of the methodology employed, choose music with a specific purpose in mind. According to Green (2010) teachers choose songs with many specific purposes in mind: 1. Pieces with an appropriate vocal range for the development of the students; 2. Pieces that teach specific musical concepts – pitch, rhythm, style, or form; 3. Aesthetic reasons; and 4. Diversity (of styles and of cultural representation). The teachers in this study used a wide variety of materials, from original Orff Schulwerk materials, such as the *Music for Children* volumes, to contemporary materials they adapted specifically for use in their classrooms (a full range of materials can be found in Chapter IV in Table 4.9). Each of the teachers in this study chose the materials with the intent to teach improvisation. With the advanced knowledge that they would be teaching

improvisation they chose pieces that fell into one of three categories: 1. Pieces used to convey and/or teach certain musical concepts, such a specific rhythm; 2. Pieces used to inspire musical creativity, such as composition and improvisation – e.g. call and response songs; and 3. Pieces designed to reach a particular student population.

Pieces Used to Convey and/or Teach Certain Musical Concepts

One reason teachers chose their musical material is for the elements that reside in the song or piece that can be brought to the forefront to teach students a musical concept. The musical concepts include, but are not restricted to: pitch, rhythm, style, or form. The Orff teachers in this study chose pieces that introduced new rhythms and common musical forms with the intent to allow students to show their learning through manipulation of the elements during improvisation activities.

For example, Mr. Braun chose the song “Ding, Dong, Diggidiggidong,” from *Music for Children, Volume I: Pentatonic* (Orff & Keetman, 1958), to introduce sixteenth notes to his Third Grade Classes. While the purpose of choosing “Ding, Dong, Diggidiggidong” was to teach the rhythmic concept four sixteenth notes, Mr. Braun extended the activity to allow his students to practice the new rhythm through an improvisation activity. The word “cat” appears in the song and inspired Mr. Braun to create an improvisation activity to connect to the song using the names of animals to represent one-beat rhythms. The students created an improvisation in AAAB form, where the B section was composed by Mr. Braun and the A section improvised by themselves, allowing them to create a four-beat rhythmic pattern that could be repeated in the longer, repetitive structure.

Another example of improvisation using a new rhythm can be found in Mrs. Tommie's second scene of improvisation from Chapter IV. The class began with a rhythm activity that highlighted the syncopated rhythm, eighth-quarter-eighth notes. Mrs. Tommie wrote a blues melody for her class, with the intention that the class would improvise a B section that included the new syncopated rhythm. With students creating the B section to her melody, Mrs. Tommie set the pitch set and musical phrase length for the student improvisations and encouraged the students to include the new syncopated rhythm. Margaret Murray (1989), famous for the English edition of the *Music for Children* volumes, suggested rhythmic improvisation as a starting point for beginning improvisers. The class began improvising rhythms only and added the new rhythm, syncopation, to the blues melody that was written by Mrs. Tommie. As the students moved to the xylophone they expanded their improvisation to include pitches from the choices given by Mrs. Tommie.

While these songs/pieces were chosen with a musical element or concept in mind to teach to students, the teachers also present opportunities for students to manipulate these new elements through composition and improvisation. Van Gunten (2000) stated that she believed that teachers can best assess student's knowledge of musical elements through their use in musical improvisations. She concluded that when students are given the opportunity to manipulate new musical elements on their own terms they are able to master them through a form of play.

Pieces Used to Inspire Musical Creativity

Another factor in choosing musical material is its ability to inspire musical creativity. Some pieces were chosen for their use of rhythms, pitches, or style, while

other pieces were chosen because the musical structure offers a clear opportunity for composition and improvisation. Some of the musical structures used by the participants of this study to encourage musical creativity included: call and response, rondo form, and the 12-Bar Blues.

Call and response is a common structure used to teach improvisation, for a number of reasons. It can be used as a starting point for rhythmic improvisation where the teacher may perform the call and ask students to make a change to the rhythms in their response; this could be as small as a one beat difference as illustrated in a rhythmic improvisation activity observed in a warm-up activity in Mr. Parris's classroom prior to his first scene of improvisation described in Chapter IV. Teachers can ask their students to improvise the call of a call and response structure, making the response a constant that does not change and giving the students familiar music that returns often. Students can also create a call and response improvisation with a partner where the response uses rhythms and/or pitches from the call to create a musical conversation.

One example of the call and response structure was Mrs. Tommie's Fourth Grade class singing the work song "John Kanuka." The song contains the syncopated rhythm (eighth, quarter, eighth), but was also used because it is a call and response form, lending it to serve as a good example for improvisation. The class was broken into groups of four and each student was given a hand drum. Mrs. Tommie asked the groups to face the center and practice passing the drum to their right around the circle. The students were told to say "up, down, pass" as they lifted their hand drum in the air, put it back down, and then passed it to their classmate to the right of them. After practicing passing the hand drums a few times, Mrs. Tommie asked the class to perform the four-beat rhythm in

Figure 5.1, that corresponds to the melody of the song, before saying “up, down, pass” and passing the drum. Once the class practiced performing the rhythmic pattern and passing the drum Mrs. Tommie asked them to perform it as the “answer” as she performed an eight-beat rhythmic improvisation as the “call” of the song. Mrs. Tommie included the rhythm, dotted-quarter, eighth note, (Figure 5.2), in each of her rhythmic improvisations.



Figure 5.1 Response rhythm played on hand drum.



Figure 5.2 Rhythm included in Mrs. Tommie's improvisation.

One hand drum in each of the groups of four students was different than the other three and Mrs. Tommie told the class that the student holding that drum would be the person improvising an eight-beat rhythmic improvisation. Mrs. Tommie asked the students to include the rhythm from Figure 5.2 in their improvisation. The students took turns improvising when they had the drum that was unique to the group.

Rondo form is another common form and possibly the easiest form to engage students in when teaching improvisation. A piece or song, used as inspiration or an example, is set as the A section and the other sections (B, C, D, etc.) are improvised by students. One example of the use of rondo form is in Mr. Braun's second scene of improvisation in Chapter IV, where the class improvised together as the A section and individual students were selected to create improvisations for the subsequent B, C, D, etc. sections. Extending any piece or song is easy in rondo form because the original inspiring

piece of music flanks either side of the improvisations. The use of rondo form was observed in the classrooms of Mr. Braun, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Parris, and Mrs. Tommie and mentioned in interviews by Mrs. Beasley.

Another structure that was used in this study to inspire improvisation was the 12-bar blues. The use of the 12-Bar Blues is illustrated in Mr. Andrews's first scene of improvisation in Chapter IV. Mr. Andrews used the simple melody of the jazz standard "C Jam Blues" as an access point for students to improvise using the 12-bar blues. In addition to Mr. Andrews, Mrs. Tommie was observed using the 12-bar blues structure with her students and it was mentioned in interviews by Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Braun, and Mr. Gonzalez. The 12-Bar Blues is not unique to the Orff approach and is a more complex improvisation task due to the harmonic changes.

The musical structure of a piece of music is one reason why a teacher may choose a piece to engage their students in improvisation. While call and response, rondo form, and the 12-Bar Blues are not the only musical structures used to engage students in improvisation they were the most common found in this study. Using authentic musical structures, while improvising, gives students an accurate "real world" application to where they would find musical improvisations.

Pieces Designed to Reach a Particular Student Population

When choosing pieces/songs for their classes teachers often consider their student population and the relevance the selections may have to these students. Some pieces are chosen because they are required in the district or school's curriculum, others are taught because of a belief that all children should know them, such as patriotic songs, but when possible teachers choose pieces to which students can relate. These pieces vary by school

community and it is the responsibility of the teacher to know the kind(s) of music that will best reach her/his students. The musical selections observed in this study included: popular music songs, various folk songs, African American spirituals, blues songs, and other multi-cultural music.

Mrs. Beasley chose the popular song, "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," as a model of a simple I-IV-V chord structure. While the song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" changes tonality to the IV and V chords within the structure of the piece, Mrs. Beasley asked her students to improvise melodically in G Pentatonic. Using the pentatonic scale allowed the students to perform melodic improvisations without having to worry about the function of the chords, while simultaneously hearing the chord structure as preparation for future pieces and improvisations. Initially students were limited to using only the pitches B, A, and G, and later expanded outwards to include the complete pentatonic scale.

Another example of music chosen to engage students is Mr. Andrews's selection of the traditional Chinese New Year Lion Drumming. Throughout the year at Mr. Andrews's school the students participate in different annual events that include musical performances. While there is not a large number of Chinese students at the Pond Forest School, the school community celebrates cultural diversity and holds an annual Chinese New Year Celebration. Mr. Andrews teaches the students a traditional Chinese drumming pattern that accompanies the Lion Dance and students learn traditional Lion Dancing. Using what they learn about traditional Chinese drumming the students improvise rhythmic drumming patterns in the same style.

Mrs. Tommie used the African American Spiritual "Old House," as a model for call and response improvisation from her second scene of improvisation in Chapter IV.

Students were excited to sing the spiritual and to act out the words “tear it down” found in the song. The song was used as a starting point for a call and response improvisation activity.

Mr. Braun’s Fifth Grade Classes sang the folk song “Benji Met the Bear.” This folk song was chosen because of its imagery and because it is a rare accessible song in the Phrygian mode. The serious tone of the song juxtaposed with the story of the bear eating Benji made it a fun song for Mr. Braun’s students to sing. This short canon easily engaged the students, exposed them to the Phrygian mode, and contained vivid imagery for movement and future recitative improvisation inspiration.

One of the major challenges that the music teachers in this study face is access to their students (limited days and times they see their students). For this reason, many teachers choose pieces of music that can crossover two, if not all three, of the aforementioned categories to maximize the benefit and bargaining the best use of time with their students. By limiting the amount of musical material taught to students they are able to deepen their understanding of musical concepts, as suggested by Hamilton (2000), to include opportunities for composition and improvisation.

The teachers in this study used a variety of musical examples from a range of sources to include original Orff Schulwerk material: such as the *Music for Children* volumes (Orff & Keetman, 1958), *Rhythmische Übung* (Keetman, 1970), and *Erstes Spiel am Xylophon* (Keetman, 1969); American and Multi-cultural folk songs: “Benji Met the Bear,” “Old Joe Clark,” “Old House,” and “Yonder Come Day;” music written by the teachers specifically for their classes, music written by other Orff Schulwerk teachers, and popular music. Whether it is original Orff Schulwerk material written by Carl Orff

and Gunild Keetman, or music written by the teacher, the music falls into one, or more, of the above categories in order to serve a specific purpose in their curriculum and to spark creativity through improvisation.

Differentiation of Improvisation Instruction

Teachers in every classroom differentiate their instruction in an attempt to meet the different needs of the students in their classroom; the Orff Schulwerk music classroom is no different. The teachers in this study were observed differentiating their improvisation instruction in a variety of ways. The most important technique used in differentiating instruction was through the Orff Schulwerk teaching process. The Orff process of teaching, as it applies to teaching improvisation, has a strong parallel with the instructional framework of the “gradual release of responsibility” (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) that is influenced heavily by the work of Lev Vygotsky. In this section I will discuss the Orff Schulwerk process to teaching and how its use in improvisation instruction intersects with the instructional framework of the “gradual release of responsibility.”

Differentiation Through the Orff Schulwerk Teaching Process

The process of the Orff approach to teaching elemental music naturally differentiates music instruction for students. The process begins with basic elements – simplified rhythms and melodic content and gradually adds in more rhythmic and melodic complexity to pieces for students to perform. Since the instruction moves from a more simplistic framework to the more complex complete piece, students are able to perform a more simplified version of the music simultaneously with other students performing the more complicated version, allowing for natural differentiation. The

teachers in this study additionally used visual aids along with instrument/student proximity/setup as a way to differentiate instruction in improvisation.

As you may recall from Chapter I, the music of the Günther-Schule was strongly connected to primitive music cultures that relied heavily on the use of drums and dance. This symbiosis between movement and music was important since Carl Orff was teaching this music to adult dancers who had music instruction merely to accompany themselves and others in movement. Orff called the music that he taught at the Günther-Schule, and later with children, “elemental.” Elemental music, as Orff defined it, was inherent in humans, linking movement and music to awaken the “humus” of the human spirit (Orff, 1963), and he believed that everyone could learn elemental music, making it suitable for children. The musical teaching process moved from the body to rhythms to melody.

Rhythmic process. There are many examples of the use of the Orff approach in rhythmic improvisation instruction in the scenes of improvisation in Chapter IV. Mr. Braun’s first scene of improvisation is a good example of the Orff process. After introducing the new rhythm, four sixteenth notes, found in the song, Mr. Braun leads the class in creating a four beat improvisation using the room’s Promethean Board. Beginning with only quarter notes, the students change one beat at a time adding four-sixteenth notes and later two-eighth notes. While Mr. Braun issued his challenges to add more and more variance, some students chose to use less rhythmic variance. The students then moved to xylophones and performed their personal rhythmic improvisation on the xylophone, on a single pitch. The class period ended before the students were able to proceed beyond this point.

Melodic process. In Mr. Gonzalez's second scene of improvisation he highlights the idea of using a song as inspiration for melodic improvisations on xylophone. Students performed the harmonic changes playing a drone on xylophone as led by Mr. Gonzalez through showing the changes on different levels of body percussion. He then led the class through different variations of stepwise and leaping melodic choices that he quickly released to be the choice of the students within the structure of the harmony. The amount of variance that each student used was his or her choice. The students then worked in pairs with one student performing a harmonic accompaniment to the other's melodic improvisation. Informal critiques and discussions between the students were encouraged as the students worked independent from the teacher in paired groups.

Scaffolding. The Orff process was discussed in interviews with participants as a way that learning is scaffolded. "I definitely take a scaffolded approach to introducing any sort of exploration leading to an improvisation activity" (Interview, 4/9/18) explained Mr. Gonzalez regarding his approach to differentiation. He went on to explain how he layers movement elements in an improvisatory movement activity like the one in his first scene of improvisation in Chapter IV. This idea of scaffolding or layering musical elements is inherent in the Orff Schulwerk teaching process; especially as students are taught multi-part pieces.

Mr. Parris explained his approach to the process of teaching improvisation in an interview:

That sort of initial part of the process (of improvisation) is teacher-led, where students are exploring, but it's very teacher directed. And then there is a little bit free-play, which often lacks an intentionality - a true understanding of how that play is happening. And then it leads into that improvisation where we bring in that sense of purpose and the sense of focus to what they're doing, but it's still an in-

the-moment creative experience that is completely been student, just student-driven, as opposed to teacher-driven. (1/23/18)

In his first scene of improvisation, Mr. Parris asked his students to “make a small change” to a rhythm that he performed on body percussion. His students improvised a change to one beat initially and were slowly given the responsibility to improvise more until they created a full piece within the given structure, see Mr. Parris’s first scene of improvisation in Chapter IV.

Using visual aids. Many of the teachers in this study used visual examples to help and/or guide students through improvisations as a way to differentiate for the visual learners in their classes (Gardner, 1983). Mr. Gonzalez used different colored magnets to represent the different ranges of the xylophone that students were to use in different sections of their improvisation (see his second scene of improvisation in Chapter IV). Mrs. Tommie wrote various rhythms on the board in her classroom to give students different ideas of how to include rhythmic variance in their improvisations (see her first scene of improvisation in Chapter IV). Lastly, Mr. Andrews, Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Braun, and Mrs. Tommie wrote chords and guiding pitches on the board, in their respective classrooms, to help assist students make note choices during their improvisations.

Classroom arrangement. Another way teachers in this study differentiated was through the arrangement of instruments during instruction, both the students’ and the teacher’s instrument used for modeling. Mr. Braun, Mr. Gonzalez, and Mrs. Tommie arranged their students’ instruments facing each other during group/partner improvisations so that they could see what their partner was performing. Lastly Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Braun, and Mrs. Tommie modeled examples of improvisations on

xylophones upside down so that the students were able to see the example in the same way that they would see their instrument if they were playing.

Teacher accompaniment. Accompanying students as they improvise was another way these expert teachers differentiated to assisted students in performing together. Mr. Andrews, Mrs. Beasley, Mrs. Gonzalez, and Mr. Parris accompanied their students on the piano as students performed, and Mr. Andrews, Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Gonzalez, and Mrs. Tommie all accompanied on percussion instruments to keep a steady beat and put the student improvisations into a larger context of an ensemble using temple blocks, djembe, tubano, and drum set, respectively.

Student groupings. The last approach to differentiating instruction used by the participants in this study was the strategic arrangement of students in pairs, groups, and their arrangement through the room. One example of this is from Mrs. Beasley's second scene of improvisation, where newer students were intentionally paired with more experienced students so that the more experienced students could help guide the newer students. Based on the transient nature of the student population in Mrs. Beasley's school this form of differentiation is helpful with her larger class sizes.

Mr. Braun, Mr. Gonzalez, and Mrs. Tommie paired students in their various improvisation activities. Mr. Braun's Sixth Grade classes, illustrated in his second scene of improvisation in Chapter IV, students were paired so that a student accompanied on ukulele as their partner performed a planned improvisation on the xylophone. In Mr. Gonzalez's second scene of improvisation his Fifth Grade students were paired to provide accompaniment while their partner performed an improvisation.

The Orff Schulwerk process of teaching and the other previously listed examples show how the teachers in this study use how they teach to differentiate instruction for their students. The Orff approach, if executed correctly, naturally differentiates for students in their music instruction, which can be adapted and applied to improvisation instruction. The application of this teaching process to improvisation instruction intersects with the pedagogical theory of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, and Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) instructional framework of the gradual release of responsibility.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, as stated in Chapter II, is one pedagogical basis for teaching improvisation. The pedagogical theory is that if a teacher guides a student or the student is surrounded by a more skilled peer, these "experts" can influence the student's ability to achieve at a higher level than the student is otherwise capable of on his or her own. Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) theory the "gradual release of responsibility" relies on the work of Vygotsky to frame their method of transference from teacher to student. The pedagogical theory is that the teacher will lead by modeling and guided practice, slowly moving from teacher-directed to student-led activity. "The critical stage of the model is the 'guided practice,' the stage in which the teacher gradually releases task responsibility to students" (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983, p. 338). The "guided practice" consists of restrictive rhythmic and/or melodic choices and gradually allowing students more options during their improvisations until they are making all of the rhythmic and/or melodic choices within the given framework of the improvisation. Each of the teachers in this study used an approach that corresponds

to the theory of the gradual release of responsibility during their improvisation instruction.

When modeling improvisation, all of the teachers used a sequence explained by Mr. Braun after one of his Fourth Grade classes improvised as “I do, we do, you do.” Pearson and Gallagher’s 1983 study was focused on reading comprehension and began with conceptual tasks divided into four components: “(a) posing a question, (b) answering it, (c) finding evidence, and (d) giving the reasoning for how to get from the evidence to the answer” (p. 338). From these four components they hypothesized four stages of the transfer of responsibility:

Stage 1, Modeling, the teacher did all four tasks (a)-(d); in Stage 2, the teacher did (a) and (b) while students did (c) and (d); in Stage 3, the teacher took responsibility for (a) and (c) and the students, (b) and (d); finally in Stage 4, the students did all but (a). (p. 338)

Fisher and Frey (2008) use the gradual release of responsibility in their article about homework and make a more direct connection to Mr. Braun’s process. They suggest that there are three steps to releasing responsibility from teacher to students and they include:

1. Guided Instruction – I do, 2. Collaborative Learning – we do, and 3. Independent Tasks – you do (pp. 41-42).

The beginning stages of improvisation are very restrictive and teacher-directed – the opposite of what you might expect in an approach that is known for its championing of student choice and creation. These restrictions are in place to allow students choices without a loss of focus – the goal is for the improvisation to be fluid and musical. As students gain experience and comfort within the set parameters they move towards more choices until they are able to use every possible choice, in any combination, within the

structure they are improvising; this directly intersects with the gradual release of responsibility pedagogical approach.

The instructional framework of the gradual release of responsibility allows teachers to differentiate instruction for students easily. The approach allows students to stay within more restrictive parameters, as needed, while their peers move towards more independence. Within a classroom structure, all of the students are improvising within the same piece and within the same structure, but some students are improvising with more restrictions while others are released to make more of their own choices.

Ontogenetic Approach to Teaching Improvisation

One of the most significant findings in this study was a systematic approach to teaching improvisation that each of the participants used with their students. All of the participants in this study had different ways they present improvisation to their students based on the material that they use to access it, but the one way that all of the teachers presented improvisation was their step-by-step addition of rhythms and pitches to their students' choices during improvisation. In AOSA's "Teacher Education Curriculum Glossary" (2013), the phrase "Ontogenetic approach to melody" is used to describe the Orff process of teaching melody and is defined as "a developmental study of melody, beginning with the call (sol mi) and progressing to the diatonic scale: bitonic, tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic, hexatonic, diatonic" (p. 15). While the definition only references melody, the teachers in this study use this approach to teach all aspects of music -rhythm, movement, etc. – and improvisation.

"Ontogenetic" is defined, by Merriam-Webster dictionary online as "of, relating to, or appearing in the course of ontogeny" (2018), and "ontogeny" is defined as "the

development or course of development especially of an individual organism” (2018). The use of the term “ontogenetic” is not surprising, as it relates directly to how Carl Orff talks about elemental music as “near the earth, natural, physical” (1963, p. 144) referring to certain musical elements and experiences as a way to plant a seed in students for future musical development. The term “seed” is used broadly by Orff Schulwerk teachers and is referenced often by Orff Schulwerk clinicians in Orff workshops.

This ontogenetical approach was used in all four types of improvisation identified in Chapter IV: rhythmic, melodic, movement, and pre-compositional activities. In the case of rhythmic improvisation teachers began with simple echoes, modeling many possible rhythmic choices as possible. After modeling these different possibilities the students were led back to the steady beat and asked to change just one beat at a time. Students were then asked to change the beat on which the rhythmic variation occurred multiple times before they added a variance to a second beat.

Similarly for melodic improvisation, students were asked to improvise rhythmic variation using only one pitch to start, moving to other pitches only after practicing many rhythmic permutations on only one pitch. Pitches were added slowly, with great care, in relation to the harmonic structure, using thirds and fifths of the chords, or melodically through reference to neighbor and passing tones. Simple structures were used to allow students to improvise in short phrases that were easily manipulated. Each teacher had a method of modeling, then practicing as a class before students were asked to volunteer to perform their improvisation individually. Mr. Parris (Interview, 11/10/17) explained how he allows students to practice their improvisation:

I find it's really important to give them time to do whole group improvisation where it sounds chaotic, but gives them a chance to get comfortable with the idea.

And then, okay, can I have just the back row? Just the second row? And then, do I have any volunteers that would like to have a turn?

The connection to the approach of the gradual release of responsibility, as explained in the previous section, is evident in the time allotted for group practice of student improvisations.

The finding that Orff teachers use an ontogenetic approach to teaching improvisation is significant because in my own levels training and in informal discussions with other teachers who use the Orff approach this process was not referenced or taught in application to teaching improvisation. The use of an ontogenetic approach to teaching improvisation is significant because it shows that there is a unified and systematic approach used by all of the Orff teachers in this study to teach improvisation. Nothing is left to chance in teaching improvisation, beyond exploratory improvisation; each step the teacher takes is purposeful and is shown to the student systemically. The students are led, in keeping with the gradual release of responsibility process, through guided practice and a very restrictive amount of choice. As instruction continues the students are shown models with more choice and given the opportunity to make more choices on their own until they are completely released to create improvisations within the set parameters.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that are important to note, as it is considered within the context of the larger field of improvisation and music education. The first three limitations relate to the participant sample in this study while the final limitation relates to the study design of this multi-case instrumental study.

First, all of the participants of this study are expert Orff Schulwerk teachers, AOSA-approved teacher-educators with similar training and experience. This study was specifically designed to follow the practice of Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators and does not necessarily reflect the improvisation instruction of upper elementary school general music teachers that use other approaches to teach in their classrooms. Because all participants were trained in and now teach using the Orff Schulwerk approach, they consequently have similar knowledge, use similar materials, and structure their classrooms in similar ways. In addition to being practicing public or private school general music teachers these participants all actively present workshops at the local, state, and national levels. As a consequence, the participants in this sample all possess a number of similarities and thus the findings of this study cannot be generalized to a larger population.

Second, the participant sample was a geographic convenience sample because there was an adequate and diverse sample within a reasonable driving distance. The geographic region was limited to those teachers living within the regions between Boston, MA and Northern Virginia (north to south) and New Jersey to Eastern Ohio (east to west). Because adequate potential participants were available in this geographic region, accessible to me as the researcher, a larger sample was not sought. The nature of Orff Schulwerk professional development is that teachers typically take courses easily accessible to them in their home region. As a consequence, many of the participants have been educated in the Orff Schulwerk method in the same location with a similar style and focus. The participants' experience and practices with Orff Schulwerk may be different than teachers living in other regions of the United States and other places in the world.

Third, there were six teacher-participants in this study. Stake suggests that a multi-case study contain no “fewer than 4 or more than 15 cases” (2006, p. 22). While six subjects fit within the range suggested by Stake for a multi-case study this, by no means, could adequately represent all teachers, Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators, or Orff Schulwerk teachers who teach upper elementary school general music. These six teachers’ experiences may be similar to other Orff Schulwerk teacher-educators, but this study cannot generalize to those teachers’ experiences.

The final limitation of this study is the time invested with each participant, through two interviews and two to three days of classroom observations. The distance from the primary investigator and the time that these practicing teachers were able to invest in participating in this study had an impact on the findings. Through two interviews they were able to express who they are as teachers, how important improvisation is in their classroom practice, and how they use improvisation in their music instruction. The two to three days of classroom visits were packed with varying improvisation activities that engaged students in rhythmic, melodic, movement, and pre-compositional improvisation activities. Each of these teachers knew, in advance, that the focus of this study was on improvisation and were asked to provide lessons that were based on or included improvisation. Although all teachers claimed that improvisation was a regular part of their practice, there is no way to know whether they specially prepared lessons featuring improvisation as part of the visit. While each teacher was observed teaching a variety of improvisation activities to multiple grades these observations are only a small snap-shot of what these teachers do throughout an entire school year and

cannot possibly encompass everything that they do with their students throughout the year.

Implications for the Music Education Field

Improvisation instruction is a valued practice in the general music classroom as evidenced by the number of in-service professional development offerings in improvisation instruction and improvisation's inclusion in the 2014 National of Core Arts Standards (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014). While improvisation is a valued practice there is a deficit of courses that include how to teach improvisation in pre-service teacher education programs (Bernhard, 2012; Campbell, 2009; Della Pietra & Campbell, 1995; Mishra, Day, Littles, & Vandewalker, 2011; Scott, 2007). Pre-service teachers in music education have a plethora of courses that span the spectrum of choral, orchestral, band, and general music required in four- or five-year programs, but colleges and universities may need to evaluate whether the inclusion of improvisation instruction will enhance student learning and benefit new graduates in their transition into teaching.

Teachers who use the Orff approach should take note that students need to learn how to improvise in the same way that they need to learn how to perform rhythms and sing pitches. The ontogenetic approach to teaching melody that is common and familiar to Orff-trained teachers, can be used to teach children to improvise, beginning very restrictive with very little choices, moving towards an open improvisation with all possibilities within the given musical structure. Teachers who use the Orff approach may fear the perception that this approach is too teacher-directed, especially for a creative activity such as improvisation, but are encouraged to experiment with it in their

classroom. The participants of this study were able to move their students from creating only one small change to making many choices within the period of one short class. Consistent instruction using this approach has the potential to open students to more self-expression and comfort in performing in front of their peers, as students are guided through small changes and given time to practice.

More clarity is necessary in Orff Schulwerk levels courses regarding how to approach and instruct students in improvisation. Many teachers complete the three levels for Orff Schulwerk certification through AOSA-approved courses and still do not feel comfortable teaching students to improvise. Since the Orff Schulwerk approach's inception is rooted in improvisation, teachers at each level of Orff Schulwerk course training should have a strong grasp of how to teach students to improvise. While each of the Orff teacher-educators in this study were clearly competent in teaching improvisation, it is surprising that this does not transfer to Orff Schulwerk level courses.

General music teachers and all teachers who teach music improvisation should consider using a method that focuses on the process of improvisation. Restricting improvisational choices and allowing time for students to "play" with their ideas helps students build a positive self-efficacy in relation to improvisation. Including improvisation instruction in all facets of music instruction allow students to put their knowledge to the test in creating something new and finding new possibilities with musical skills and concepts.

Student's understanding and true engagement in music comes with time to explore and play with concepts and skills that they learn during music class. Their creativity as musicians comes through when they find the musical combinations that

speak to them. Many music educators do not teach improvisation because they claim they do not have enough time to include it during their limited class periods. Limited classroom time and an overload of concepts and skills in the curriculum have a negative impact on the time teachers are able to spend on activities to inspire student creativity. The balance between instructional time and curricular requirements need to be investigated further. A comprehensive music curriculum needs to account for time to allow students an opportunity to truly synthesize their learning and to create music using what they have learned.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a number of possibilities for future research that may be concluded from this study. The current study has limitations in geographic region and scope and more can be learned by replicating this study in a different region or with a diversification of the region where teachers live and teach. As curriculums are adapted to fit the needs and diversity of the students in a specific school district or school, differing regions of the country may contain different musical traditions based on the population and the region. It is possible that Orff Schulwerk teachers in other areas approach improvisation instruction differently as well. Replication of this study with other groups of Orff teacher-educators may elicit additional important ideas about how improvisation is taught.

This study focused on improvisation broadly and included rhythmic, melodic, movement, and pre-compositional improvisation within its scope. Research with more specificity may enable the researcher and the readers to gain a finer view of one type of improvisation and engage more deeply with it. Generally, there is very little research on

teachers' practice of teaching improvisation – how and with what materials. Moreover, there is even less research focusing on movement and pre-compositional improvisation. Movement instruction is a vital part of Orff Schulwerk and movement improvisation should be as well. More research is needed in the relationship between music and movement and how movement improvisation is taught in an Orff Schulwerk classroom. A theme that emerged during this study is what the participants called “pre-compositional” improvisation. Research is necessary to discuss the role of improvisation in the compositional process and how it relates to other types of improvisation. A study with younger students might yield more examples of movement improvisation and pre-compositional improvisation than was experienced in this study.

Improvisation is a centerpiece of music instruction in the Orff Schulwerk music classroom, but music teachers are restricted by limitations outside of their control: amount of time with their students, a prescribed curriculum, etc. Further research is necessary to determine how improvisation and improvisation instruction weigh in importance in relation to other concepts and musical activities and if student contact time and breadth of a required music curriculum have an impact on the amount of time Orff Schulwerk teachers spend on improvisation.

Lastly, more research is needed to determine whether improvisation and composition should have a more prominent place in coursework offerings for pre-service music teachers. As music education trends shift towards the inclusion of popular music (Green, 2002; 2008) and diverse multi-cultural musics that rely on improvisation in their practice should improvisation be moved further forward in importance in teacher preparation programs? Are specific courses needed to address the teaching of

improvisation and composition for future educators or can these needs be addressed within the current course offerings for pre-service music teachers? Should training on how to teach improvisation continue to be offered *only* through in-service professional development opportunities? Studies examining these and other questions regarding the preparation of teachers to teach improvisation are greatly needed in the field of music education. Improvisation is a valued practice in elementary general music classrooms and research about the best way to prepare teachers to adequately address this practice is necessary.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to find the teaching activities used, and situations created, by expert Orff Schulwerk teachers to encourage creative musical improvisations, the materials, musical and otherwise, these teachers use to foster improvisation, and differentiation strategies used to assist students during improvisation. While each of the six teacher-participants had their own style and worked within a specific school environment with a student population, each also used a systematic approach to teaching improvisation. The finding that the ontogenetic approach within Orff is being applied to improvisation by these teachers is significant. The approach of the gradual release of responsibility is fervently integrated in the Orff Schulwerk approach to teaching and should be employed in all creative activities including improvisation.

Too often music is taught from a technical perspective, where music literacy and precision of performance are the only foci and most, if not all, creative aspects of music are no longer present. In general music, the general population is better served learning improvisation to create their own music rather than focusing on learning Western music

notation. Improvisation may build more valuable creativity skills that can be transferable to other contexts, as suggested by Robinson and Aronica (2015). As I adjust my teaching, as a result of my Orff Schulwerk training and the findings of this study, to allow for more time for students to be creative and “play” with the elements of music that they have learned, I can see a difference in the way that my students interact with music. In the upper elementary school grades students have the skills and background to create their own music and music educators should provide students with a safe place to explore music, in all of its aspects, and allow them to explore outside of the lines of tradition and convention. My hope is that more music educators evaluate their teaching perspective to give their students license to find their own voice through music.

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APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SCREENING
INTERVIEW

Subject: You are invited to participate.

Dear _____¹,

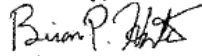
My name is Brian P. Hunter and I am a doctoral student in the Music Department of Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. I am conducting research of Orff Schulwerk teachers' use of improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms. I am contacting you because you are a certified Orff Schulwerk Teacher Educator. I would like you to participate in a screening interview, through Skype, to learn more about you, your school, and your background as a teacher to determine your fit for my study.

For more information, I have attached an informed consent letter and form that explains my study in greater detail. Please let me know if you have any questions about it.

Now that I have received approval to begin my study, I would like to set up a screening interview as soon as possible. If you decide to participate after reading the attached letter, please let me know so that we can make arrangements to proceed. If you decide not to participate, kindly reply to this email to let me know at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Brian P. Hunter

bphunter@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

APPROVED

MAY 29 2017

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

¹ Subject's names are known and will be personalized.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM SCREENING INTERVIEW

I am a doctoral candidate in the department of Music at Rutgers University, and I am conducting interviews for my dissertation. I am studying the use of improvisation by Orff Schulwerk teachers with upper elementary school students in their general music classes.

During this screening interview you will be asked to answer some questions about your educational background, school environment, and experience as an Orff Schulwerk teacher. This interview was designed to be approximately a half hour in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer. I will use this interview to determine fit for my study. After I have conducted all of my screening interviews I will contact you to inform you that you either do not fit my study or to invite you to participate in another interview and allow me to visit your classroom.

My research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your educational background, the number of years in education, your experience as an Orff Schulwerk teacher, and basic information about your school's music program. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity.

I, my faculty advisor, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for three years per Federal Regulations and destroyed after such time.

You are aware that your participation in this interview is voluntary. You understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, you wish to stop the interview, you may do so without having to give an explanation.

The screening interview will be audio recorded through Skype. The recording will be used to determine further participation in this study that may include another interview and classroom visit.

The recording of the interview will include your name and school's name, but will be transcribed using a pseudonym. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation, then you can ask the interviewer to rewind the recording and record over such information OR you can ask that certain text be removed from the dataset/transcripts. The recording will be stored on a password protected flash drive. The recordings will be destroyed upon publication of the study results.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. Your participation may benefit the field of general music and Orff Schulwerk teachers by informing them of the planning and practices of Orff Schulwerk teachers in teaching improvisation to their upper elementary school students in the general music classroom, or by prompting additional research into the practice of teaching improvisation in general music. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact myself at:

Brian P. Hunter
126 Bentley Avenue
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619
Phone: 609-651-1499
Email: bphunter@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

You may also contact my faculty advisor:

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<p>IRB Stamp Box</p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>MAY 29 2017</p> <p>Approved by the Rutgers IRB</p>	<p>IRB Stamp Box</p>
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Page 1

Dr. Stephanie Cronenberg, PhD
 Mason Gross School of the Arts
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
 81 George Street, Art History 210
 New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901
 Phone: 848-932-1731
 Email: scronenberg@mgsa.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers (which is a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at:

Institutional Review Board
 Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
 Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200
 335 George Street, 3rd Floor
 New Brunswick, NJ 08901
 Phone: 732-235-2866
 Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you are aware that your participation in this interview is voluntary. You understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, you wish to stop an interview, you may do so without having to give an explanation. Once you have read the above form and, with the understanding that you can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, you need to let me know your decision to participate in today's interview. You will be offered a copy of this consent form that you may keep for your own reference.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Signature: Brian P. White Date _____

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<p>IRB Stamp Box</p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>MAY 29 2017</p> <p>Approved by the Rutgers IRB</p>	<p>IRB Stamp Box</p>
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APPENDIX C: SCREENING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about your educational background?
2. What was your major instrument/voice in college? Do you play any instruments/sing other than your major instrument in college?
3. How long have you been teaching?
4. Tell me about your school, broadly?
5. What is your current teaching assignment? Was this always your teaching assignment or have you taught anything different?
6. How often, and for how long, do your students have music?
7. What drew you to Orff Schulwerk?
8. How do you include improvisation in your classroom? In what grades?
9. What materials do you regularly use?
10. Are you willing to participate further? And be observed?

APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO PARTICIPANT TO CONTINUE THE STUDY

Subject: You are invited to continue to participate.

Dear _____²,

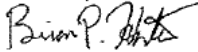
Thank you for your participation in my screening interview for my research of Orff Schulwerk teachers' use of improvisation in their upper elementary school general music classrooms. I would like to invite you to further participate in my study. This will include a second interview, in person or on Skype, about your planning for, and use of improvisation in your upper elementary school general music classroom, a series of classroom visits to see you implement your improvisation lessons, and a follow-up interview after my classroom visit.

For more information, I have attached an informed consent letter and form that explains my study in greater detail. Please let me know if you have any questions about it.

I would like to set up a second interview, classroom visits, and a follow-up interview as soon as possible. If you decide to participate after reading the attached letter, please let me know so that we can make arrangements to proceed. If you decide not to participate, kindly reply to this email to let me know at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Brian P. Hunter

bphunter@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

APPROVED

MAY 29 2017

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

² Subject's names are known and will be personalized.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM SECOND INTERVIEW

I am a doctoral candidate in the department of Music at Rutgers University, and I am conducting interviews for my dissertation. I am studying the use of improvisation by Orff Schulwerk teachers with upper elementary school students in their general music classes.

During this second interview, you will be asked to answer some questions about the planning, materials used, and teaching methods that you use to teach improvisation and/or situations you create to encourage student improvisation in the general music classroom. This interview was designed to be approximately forty-five minutes in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer.

My research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your beliefs and philosophy about improvisation, materials you use to teach improvisation, and the ways that you teach improvisation. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity.

The second interview will be audio recorded in person or through Skype, as necessitated by your schedule and location. I, my faculty advisor, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. All study data will be kept for three years per Federal Regulations and destroyed after such time.

In the final written report for my study (including my dissertation and any subsequent publications or conference presentations), you and your school will be given pseudonyms. The location of your school will be generalized. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation, then you can ask the interviewer to rewind the recording and record over such information OR you can ask that certain text be removed from the dataset/transcripts. The recording will be stored on a password protected flash drive. The recordings will be destroyed upon publication of the study results.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. Your participation may benefit the field of general music and Orff Schulwerk teachers by informing them of the planning and practices of Orff Schulwerk teachers in teaching improvisation to their upper elementary school students in the general music classroom, or by prompting additional research into the practice of teaching improvisation in general music. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact myself at:

Brian P. Hunter
126 Bentley Avenue
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619
Phone: 609-651-1499
Email: bphunter@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

You may also contact my faculty advisor:

Dr. Stephanie Cronenberg, PhD
Mason Gross School of the Arts
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
81 George Street, Art History 210
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

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IRB Stamp Box

APPROVED

MAY 29 2017

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Version Date: v1.0
Page 1

Phone: 848-932-1781
Email: scronenberg@mgsa.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers (which is a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at:

Institutional Review Board
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200
335 George Street, 3rd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Phone: 732-235-2866
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you are aware that your participation in this interview is voluntary. You understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, you wish to stop an interview, you may do so without having to give an explanation. Once you have read the above form and, with the understanding that you can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, you need to let me know your decision to participate in today's interview. You will be offered a copy of this consent form that you may keep for your own reference.

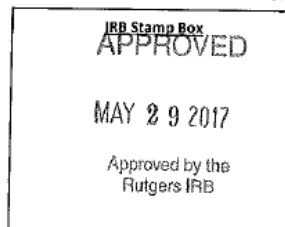
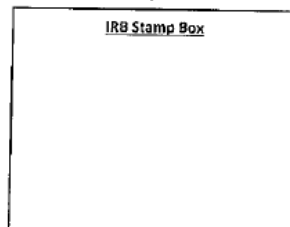
Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Signature: Brian P. Hite Date _____

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APPENDIX F: SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How would you define improvisation?
2. Before becoming a teacher what experience in improvisation did you have?
3. Do you still practice and/or perform regularly? Is improvisation a part of your current practice or performance on your instrument/voice?
4. Tell me more about the music program in your school/district?
5. What is your teaching schedule?
6. How long have you used the Orff Schulwerk approach in your teaching?
7. What, in your view, is the purpose of improvisation?
8. Do you believe improvisation can be taught?
9. In your opinion, how important is improvisation in Orff Schulwerk? In your own music classroom?
10. What experiences in musical improvisation do your students have prior to grade 3 or 4 (depending on what grades the teacher teaches)?
11. What do you do to ensure that students are successful when improvising?

APPENDIX G: ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT FOR SITE VISIT

I am a doctoral candidate in the department of Music at Rutgers University, and I am conducting observations of expert Orff Schulwerk teachers for my dissertation. I am studying the use of improvisation by Orff Schulwerk teachers with upper elementary school students in their general music classes.

<music teacher's name>, the music teacher in your school, has been identified as an expert Orff Schulwerk teacher who fits the participation criteria for my study.

My research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about <music teacher's name> and your school. This information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between <music teacher's name> and your school in the research exists. Some of the information collected about <music teacher's name> and your school include their belief and philosophy about improvisation, materials they use to teach improvisation, and the ways that they teach improvisation. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to their personal identity and the identity of your school. This research is focused on the teacher and the materials and techniques they use in their classroom.

I, my faculty advisor, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. All study data will be kept for three years per Federal Regulations and destroyed after such time. In the final written report for my study (including my dissertation and any subsequent publications or conference presentations), your music teacher and your school will be given pseudonyms. The location of your school will be generalized. The field notes will also use .

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. Your participation may benefit the field of general music and Orff Schulwerk teachers by informing them of the planning and practices of Orff Schulwerk teachers in teaching improvisation to their upper elementary school students in the general music classroom, or by prompting additional research into the practice of teaching improvisation in general music. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact myself at:

Brian P. Hunter
126 Bentley Avenue
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619
Phone: 609-651-1499
Email: bphunter@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

You may also contact my faculty advisor:

Dr. Stephanie Cronenberg, PhD
Mason Gross School of the Arts
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
81 George Street, Art History 210
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901
Phone: 848-932-1781
Email: scronenberg@mgsa.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers (which is a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at:

Institutional Review Board
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200
335 George Street, 3rd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Phone: 732-235-2866

Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you are aware that your participation in these site observations are voluntary. You understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, you wish to stop an interview, you may do so without having to give an explanation. Once you have read the above form and, with the understanding that you can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, you need to let me know your decision to participate in today's interview. You will be offered a copy of this consent form that you may keep for your own reference.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to observe <name of music teacher> in your school as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the field notes of the observations for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Signature: Brian P. White Date _____

APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observation Protocol

Date:

Time:

Site:

Case:

Grade Level:

Activity/Activities:

Descriptive Notes	Comments and/or Questions

APPENDIX I: IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research and Regulatory Affairs
Arts and Sciences IRB
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
335 George Street / Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

<https://orra.rutgers.edu/hssp>

732-235-2666

June 1, 2017

Brian P. Hunter
126 Bentley Avenue
Hamilton NJ 08619

P.I. Name: Hunter
Protocol #: E17-663

Dear Brian P. Hunter:

This project identified below has been approved for exemption under one of the six categories noted in 45 CFR 46, and as noted below:

Protocol Title: "A Case Study of Orff Schulwerk Teachers' Use of Improvisation in the Upper School General Music Classroom"

Exemption Date: 5/29/2017 Exempt Category: 1

This exemption is based on the following assumptions:

- **This Approval** - The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted.
- **Reporting** - ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications** - Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form (s)** - Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;

Additional Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authorization from All School Sites Must Be Forwarded to the IRB Prior to the Commencement of Study Procedures at Each Site.
------------------------	--

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.

Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michelle Teppe".

Acting For--
Beverly Teppe, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Food Science
IRB Chair, Arts and Sciences Institutional Review Board
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

cc: Stephanie Cronenberg (MW:hb)

APPENDIX J: CROSS-CASE THEME COMPARISON

Cross-Case Theme Comparison

Utility of Cases	Braun	Andrews	Parris	Tommie	Gonzalez	KT	Total Appearances
Instructional Themes							
1. Rhythmic Improvisation	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	6
A. Body Percussion	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X	6
B. Word-Chaining/Speech	X, *	X	X, *		X	*	4
C. Recitative to Untuned Percussion	X						1
D. Untuned Percussion	X	X	*	X		*	5
E. Rhythm Poison		X					1
F. Concentration 64		X					1
G. Lion Drumming		X					1
H. Jazz Licks		X					1
I. Strumming Patterns	*			X			2
J. Finish a phrase	*			*		*	3
K. Call and response	*		*	*		*	4
2. Melodic Improvisation	X, *	X, *	X	X, *	X, *	X, *	6
A. Recorder	X	X, *	*	X	*	X	6
B. Targeted Pitches	X	X	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	6
C. Inspired by Painting	X						1
D. 12-Bar Blues Solo	*	X		*			3
E. Ostinato		X, *					1
F. Pentatonic from word-chaining			X				1
G. Creating a new section for a known song		X	X	X (Scat Vocal)	X	X	4
H. Call and Response	*	*		X	X, *	X, *	5
I. Scat Vocal				X			1
J. Vocal		*		X	*		3
K. Shapes to Sound		*					1
L. Finish a phrase				*		*	2
3. Movement Improvisation	X, *	X, *	X, *	*	X, *	*	6
A. Shadow Improvisation	X						1
B. Inspired by a Painting	X						1
C. Inspire by Recitative	X						1
D. Various Time Signatures		X					1
E. Movement while playing a drum		X					1
F. Creating a Folk Dance			X				1
G. Elements in Movement		X, *			X, *		2
H. Geometric Shapes					X		1
I. Dramatic Improvisation	*	*	*			*	4
4. Pre-compositional Improvisation		X, *	X	X, *	*		4

Cross-Case Theme Comparison

Utility of Cases	Braun	Andrews	Parris	Tommie	Gonzalez	KT	Total Appearances
5. Expressive Improvisation					X	*	2
Materials Used Themes							
1. Music for Children Volumes	X, *		X, *	*		*	4
2. Teacher created	X, *	X	X	X	X	X	5
3. Student created	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
4. Folk Songs	*	*	X	X, *			4
5. African American Spirituals				X		X	2
6. Poems			X		X	*	3
7. Visual Art	X						1
8. Jazz/Blues Pieces		X		X, *	*	*	4
9. Classical Piece		X				*	2
10. Other Orff Resources			X	X, *	X, *	X, *	4
11. Popular Music						X	1
Differentiation Strategies Themes	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	6
1. Limiting Rhythms/Pitches	X	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	X, *	6
2. Positive Reinforcement	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
3. Encourage to Try Again	X	X	X	X, *	X	X, *	6
4. Peer share/reflection	X, *	X	X	X, *	X	X, *	6
Process to teaching improvisation	X	X	X	X	X	X	6

X=observed

*=mentioned in an interview