

July 2007

AOSA RIG Newsletter

American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Research Interest Group (RIG)
Editor: RIG Chair, Isabel Barbara O'Hagin

Summer Greetings from RIG Chair!

Ah---Summertime! And the livin' is easy . . . Our precious summer months! A time to recoup our energy and time to recharge for the coming year! It's a great time of the year to reflect on our teaching practices and to sort out what worked and what didn't. This is when we can apply our researcher's mind-set to classroom-oriented issues that call out for problem-solving and resolution.

These summer months are also a great time to reconnect with old and new friends (Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver and the other gold!).

With this in mind, I hope we can regroup our RIG membership, opening channels for continuing a dialogue about what matters most in our music classrooms and in our profession. We want to hear from you!

New Look for RIG Newsletter

As your new Research Interest Group (RIG) Chair, I look forward to serving our organization for the remainder of my term. In this capacity I join Research Committee Chair, Michael Chandler, and members of RAP in forming a collaborative partnership that will better communicate to our membership the links between research and practice.

I have always believed the very nature of our philosophy and praxis is one based on inquiry, creativity, and action-based models. These foundations are centered on the interactive process between the learner, the teacher, and the environment. At the heart of the matter is the creative improvisational play grounded in the elemental Orff Schulwerk process.

RIG Newsletter Research Representatives

Your electronic RIG Newsletter not only has a fresh new look, but it includes news from research activity in your area. In this issue of the newsletter, we highlight the Research Representatives from several of the AOSA Regions, I-VI. You are encouraged to contact your Research Representative if you have any news or research activity to report for future newsletters. You may want to send your Representative a brief summary of recent research activity whether it's work-in-progress or a

completed study. They in turn will be in contact with you as we prepare our newsletters—late spring and fall of each year. The format of the newsletter is fairly open—please feel free to contribute your short articles and/or research questions. I also welcome any research-related ideas you may have—you can send these directly to me at this email address: ohagilib@cmich.edu.

Let's use our newsletter to strengthen our RIG community and to engage in stimulating discourse!

RIG Newsletter Research Representatives:

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As this is a new format for the RIG newsletter, we hope to report research news from all Regions in our next newsletter. In this issue, we have news from Regions I, III, and VI. Please note that we are in need of a representative from Region V. Contact RIG Chair, Barbara O'Hagin, if interested.

Region I News

Some exciting work in the area of teacher education is being conducted in Region I by Dr. Kate Grieshaber. She has extensively interviewed young teachers during their university methods courses and throughout their first years of teaching, and has created a DVD collage of their stories called "I'm New Here Myself: Messages of First Year Music Teachers." Dr. Grieshaber proposes that first year music teachers are required to be farther along than non-music teachers in terms of previously theorized developmental stages of first year teachers.

Region I News continued

Dr. Grieshaber writes:

Based on my experience, music teachers are forced to adapt quickly; their need for problem solving skills is immediate & relentless throughout the first year--not only due to demands of teaching--but due to challenges of concerts, festivals, field trips, touring, multiple school assignments, & state assessment requirements. . . . Individual's stories about different forms of support--orientation, induction programs, mentoring and on-going teacher assistance, best and worst experiences--provide a picture of these teachers' thinking about their own growth and change, as well as their perceptions of what was influencing their success . . . This film provides university methods teachers a way of presenting relevant issues using "voices from the real world," . . . brings awareness of the unique needs of beginning music teachers to administrators & arts coordinators, . . . and serves as an "eye opener" for young teachers-to-be, providing perspectives about how to prepare more effectively while undergraduates, and once graduated, providing insight into situations they may face in their own classrooms.

Mark Francis has recently moved from Cleveland to the Seattle area. In 2005, he completed his MA thesis entitled "The Greater Cleveland Chapter, American Orff-Schulwerk Association: An Historical Overview of the Chapter, Its Leadership and Influence in Spreading Orff Schulwerk in Northeast Ohio." Although Ohio is in Region VI, we are glad to welcome Mr. Francis to our region, and feel that his research is an important addition to historical research and calls attention to the important role that AOSA chapters play in strengthening music teacher training in the U.S.

Region III News

Research highlights in Region III focus on the work of Cynthia Colwell from the University of Kansas. Dr. Colwell, a noted professor in music therapy, presented a paper at the 2006 AOSA National Conference in Omaha, titled, "The Impact of Training in Orff Music Therapy on Session Plan Development." She is currently completing two additional studies: "The Effects of Music Therapy on the Psychological and Physiological Behaviors of Hospitalized Children," and "Examination of Orff Schulwerk Music Therapy Session Plans." Dr. Colwell's work has been published in major journals including the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Therapy Perspectives*, and the *Journal of Music Therapy*.

Region VI News

Dr. Isabel Barbara O'Hagin, Central Michigan University, continues her research in the area of early childhood music and teacher education preparation. She recently presented her research findings on preservice teachers' experiences in early childhood music labs at the Regional Lilly North Conference and at the National Conference of the College Music Society. Preservice teachers were asked to keep a log and to complete child observation forms throughout the semester. Analysis of student logs revealed that preservice teachers are learning valuable insights into the dynamic interactions that take place in a democratic learning environment. In a journal entry, one student noted:

I think it is important to model the think-aloud process as children are discovering the music because it models how a person can discover and learn through open-ended questions. This approach leaves the children yearning to learn more about music and its concepts. I used my think-aloud questions during all the labs and the children were left to explore various sounds.



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AOSA Research
Grants Proposal
Deadlines:
July 15 & January 1

Region VI News continued

During the lab, I had several meaningful moments with the children; however the most meaningful moment for me came after my lesson presentation (I had sang "Brown Squirrel" with a puppet and we sang it as a group several times). The following week, Myra's mother informed me that Myra loves the song and sings it at home all the time. Normally, Myra is very shy in the lab and so to know she is taking home concepts she learned about music from these experiences is very rewarding. Myra does not really express herself verbally or physically during the lab, so it was great to know that she does enjoy herself and is able to take something from the experience.

Based on my experiences, I will take many important musical concepts with me into my future classrooms. One of these is self-exploration and I feel it can be applied to all subject areas. What may appear as "play" to parents is actually how the children learn and discover their world. I have learned that during each music lab children should be guided and challenged through musical exploration. For example, let children perform their own ways of maintaining the rhythm...

In addition, Dr. O'Hagin has been exploring the role of the teacher—the musical *atelierista*—and children's musical play at the CMU campus preschool. After her study tour to Reggio Emilia, Italy where she learned first-hand about "The Hundred Languages of Children," she initiated a research study examining the nature of young children's musical play in a negotiated-learning environment. This study is a collaborative effort with the preschool administrator, teachers, and methods students-early childhood and music education students serving as research assistants. She welcomes readers' comments and would like to start a discussion circle with teachers interested in Reggio Emilia-influenced learning and how it intersects with the Orff Schulwerk approach.

Announcements:

Learn more about the Orff Webliography. The online interactive Orff Webliography, hosted by the University of Kentucky, can be accessed at: http://itc.uky.edu:16080/orff_research/