



**An investigation of the Orff-Schulwerk approach versus a Traditional method in teaching  
Soprano Recorder: Impacts on student musicianship and engagement.**

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## ABSTRACT

### Topic

An investigation of the Orff-Schulwerk approach versus a Traditional method in teaching  
Soprano Recorder: Impacts on student musicianship and engagement.

June 2015

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### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this comparative study is to examine the effectiveness of the Orff-Schulwerk approach versus a Traditional method in teaching recorder. Four classes of fourth grade students at Somerville Elementary School will participate in a philosophical and empirical study gauging the growth of student musicianship and consistency of focused engagement. The study will last for 10 weeks of instruction, with classes meeting two times per week.

### Rationale

“The ability to reproduce something that is heard is essential in music, as much to understanding as to importance” (Keetman, Gunild & Minna Ronnefeldt 11).

Soprano Recorder is largely used as a “Pre-Band” or “Pre-Orchestra” experience. The purpose of this paper is to inform music educators on the pros and cons of using the Orff-Schulwerk approach versus the Recorder Karate method to teach recorder. After spending a school year learning recorder, students are expected to take the knowledge and skills gained, and apply them to their first band or orchestra instrument.

The Traditional method focuses on recreation of printed music. Students are expected to memorize fingerings, read rhythmic and melodic notation from a Treble staff, and play previously composed music. The Orff-Schulwerk approach focuses on creation. The approach develops skills in ear training, improvisation, composition, ensemble skills and more.

This study will compare the results of students engaged in an Orff-Schulwerk approach to recorder education with a Traditional methods class. Each group of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will be taught the same pieces of music but with a different approach. The study will focus on a student’s ability to read a rhythm pattern and improvise on it with one note as well as a combination of notes. The study will take into account the student’s ability to keep a steady beat and tempo, follow basic composition guidelines, articulation and fluidity of phrasing. Results will be measured using a performance rubric. The study will also measure student focused engagement by examining classroom behavior.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

“The ability to reproduce something that is heard is essential in music, as much to understanding as to importance” (Keetman, Shamrock and Ronnefeld 11).

The purpose of this comparative study is to examine the effectiveness of the Orff-Schulwerk approach versus a Traditional method, such as those recommended in *Recorder Karate*, in teaching recorder. Soprano recorder is largely used as a “pre-band” or “pre-orchestra” experience. After spending a school year learning recorder, students are expected to take the knowledge and skills gained, and apply them to their first band or orchestra instrument. Four classes of fourth grade students at Somerville Elementary School will participate in a philosophical and empirical study gauging the growth of student musicianship and consistency of focused engagement.

This study will compare the results of students engaged in an Orff-Schulwerk approach to recorder education with a Traditional methods class. Each group of fourth grade students will be taught some of the same literature, but with a different approach. The Traditional method focuses on recreation of printed music. Students are expected to memorize fingerings, read rhythmic and melodic notation from a Treble staff, and play previously composed music. The Orff-Schulwerk approach focuses on creation. The approach develops skills in ear training, improvisation, composition, ensemble skills and more. The study will focus on a student’s ability to read a rhythm pattern and improvise on it with one note as well as a combination of notes. The study will take into account the student’s ability to keep a steady beat and tempo, follow basic composition guidelines, articulation and fluidity of phrasing. Results will be measured using a performance rubric. The study will also measure student focused engagement by examining student’s perceived musical confidence level as well as their enjoyment level.

I expect that there will be a discrepancy in the ability to improvise between the two groups. In my experience with teaching recorder both ways, students learning in traditional methods do not have the opportunity to do ear training, improvisation, or creation. The Orff approach on the other hand, is a creation based approach. I expect that students learning through Orff will become more adept at creating their own music and playing with innate phrasing.

When teaching with traditional methods, it tends to be whole class or small group work that is teacher-centered. The playing is focused on reproducing already created work. I expect that this will lead to less engagement and a larger number of behavior issues. The Orff approach is more student-centered, focusing on a multi-modal approach with singing, movement, improvising, and creating. As a result of being in student-centered and multi-modal environment conducive to learning, students will have higher engagement, more ownership of the material and less behavior issues.

## **Chapter 2: The tenants of The Orff-Schulwerk approach and Traditional methods**

We are in danger of glorifying the sounds we produce for their own sake, without seeing or hearing where those sounds lead. Just because you reproduce a piece from one of the Schulwerk books, and you children can play all the parts, there is no guarantee that (a) they can understand anything they have done, (b) they can hear anything they have done, or that (c) they can take those ideas, and use them in another (creative) way (Gill 20).

The Orff-Schulwerk Approach was founded by Carl Orff, a noted composer, and Dorothee Gunther in the 1920's as a music and movement pedagogy. Orff and Gunther collaborated together at the Guntherschule in Munich to develop the foundation of the approach. In 1928, Gunild Keetman, an alumnus of the school, began to collaborate with Orff to further develop the elemental music (AOSA).

The Orff-Schulwerk is a comprehensive approach to music education utilizing the idea of elemental music. It is difficult to explain what the Orff-Schulwerk is; rather, many feel it must be experienced. "When asked to define jazz, Louis Armstrong once replied, 'If you have to ask what it is, you'll never know.' Having had to describe Orff-Schulwerk to countless parents, fellow teachers and seatmates on airplanes, I wish I could get by with such a clever retort" (Goodkin 1).

The Schulwerk aims to use children's natural tendency towards play to teach music. "The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the object it loves" -Carl Gustav Jung (Goodkin 11).



The Schulwerk is also known as “elemental music” (ACEMM). It uses speech, singing, creative movement, dance, body percussion, instruments, play & drama to build musicianship skills and nourish creativity. It also places a strong emphasis on improvisation and composition- which is what this field study is paying close attention to.

In a music classroom where recorder is being taught in a traditional manner, you will see students playing from written notation. Often they are learning to read pitches on the treble staff and count rhythms to play a piece of pre-existing music. There is a strong emphasis on reading written notation.

In an Orff-Schulwerk classroom, you will see a lively myriad of other activities going on. You may see students expressively speaking the words to a poem and possibly transferring the rhythm of the words to instrumental improvisation. You may see students participating in a folk dance to experience beat, phrase length, and form. You may see students singing a song to then use their knowledge of the melody to decipher the pitches and rhythms to be played on the recorder or other pitched instrument. All of that may be done without using written music. You may see students performing ostinatos to accompany music. These ostinatos may exist in the form of speech, movement, body percussion, borduns, recorder harmonies & more. You may see any of this happening, and so much more.

One thing that would be sure to stand out in a quality Orff classroom is the use of “playful musical exploration” (Frazee “Artful” 18) to learn. Children learn to experience their world through play. These opportunities engross children into the musical experience- often without them even noticing that they are learning! The Orff-Schulwerk uses to get students to enjoy the task causing them to actively participate, gives them an opportunity to be involved in

the community, and causes them to a feeling of personal responsibility for the outcome of the event (18).

The learning process in an Orff-Schulwerk classroom starts with the teacher knowing the big picture, and breaking it up in into smaller, easily digestible pieces. Students will move through the steps of imitation, exploration, and finally, creation. Many teachers believe that adding a chance for analysis after the creation portion, allows for more significant learning. It is during this time of analysis that students are able to make sense of the work they just did. Students need the opportunity to reflect and critique their performances and choices made during the creative process in order to deepen their learning (Frazee “Artful” 20).

One of the significant ways students create is by improvisation and composition. The creation piece is integral to the learning process. “To ignore the learning potential involved in making up and making sense of musical material . . . overlooks countless possibilities for artistic expression and limits student comprehension” (Frazee “Artful” 2).

Improvisation allows students to build their confidence by become acquainted with the musical material. It allows them to build their musical “toolbox”, as well as experience and experiment with their instrumental technique (Keetman, Shamerock, and Ronnefeld 9).

“This sense of confidence with the potential for expression opens a door for increasing sensitivity to others; in this regard the improvisation exercises have the effect of improving the ability to reproduce and interpret music” (9).

Teaching improvisation starts with “short ‘conversations’ between teacher and individual children- these can be metric or free- and these grow into individual forms” (Keetman 95). Creation is accomplished by giving setting up parameters for students, and then allowing them to

explore with those guidelines in mind. There are countless ways to add opportunities for creation. One example for learning to melodically improvise is started at speaking the words to a poem. From there, they will learn to clap the rhythm of the words and possibly add body percussion. At that point, they can then begin to experiment with adding notes from the pentatonic scale to be played on recorder.

Improvisation is a key to teaching music with a student centered approach. Improvisation gives students confidence when they are able to lead activities. Student led improvisation should start small with students leading improvisation with a partner, graduating to small groups, and eventually leading the entire class (Burnett 2013).

Music teachers have the important task of selecting quality music literature. Pieces of music that are presented should provide joy, excitement, learning opportunities, and the ability to “accompany a lifetime of memories and celebrations” (Frazee "Artful" 10).

When using recorder, the Orff-Schulwerk approach believes it should be used as an additional tool in a student’s musical “tool box” and not an altogether separate entity. More traditional approaches to recorder use it as pre-band instrument. This methodology focuses more on learning to read notes in the treble clef, and reproduce already existing music.

In this study, students will be engaging in two types of learning styles. One group will participate in a recorder experience utilizing the Orff-Schulwerk approach. The other, a more traditional approach. The basis for evaluating student musicianship will come from improvisation situations. According to Frazee, “Evaluation of the children’s musical development is easily accomplished in improvisation situations. You will have no trouble noting the various ability levels in the class and determining skills which need remedial work” (Frazee “Discovering Orff” 32). Improvisation requires knowing enough musical material to be able to

experiment and alter it. These situations are student centered and provide players with a chance to demonstrate their skills independently (31).

### Chapter 3: The Recorder Experience

“The least thing I enjoy doing is reading music because you can't really be creative when you read music” (Orff Student 1).

The study on pedagogy comparison involved four sections of fourth grade students in the General Music classroom. Two sections of the students were taught in what this study will call a Traditional Approach (TA). This group focused on playing pre-existing music from written notation. The other two sections were taught using the Orff-Schulwerk Approach (OA). The entire field study lasted eight weeks. Students had been taught in an integrated approach- combining both Orff and traditional methods during the first half of the school year. The study began with students taking a pre-test assessment. This test measured their ability to improvise on recorder using a speech piece. The study culminated with the same assessment for a post-test as well a student survey on their feelings towards their recorder experience, their measure of confidence in their playing ability and how often they practiced.

Both the TA and OA groups showed similar results at the beginning of the study. This was expected as students had been taught in a similar fashion for the first half of the school year. To facilitate concert production, the two groups learned some of the same repertoire. Each group experienced the repertoire using methods suited to their respective approaches. Students in the OA group were encouraged to learn to sing a song and then learn to play it by ear as well as create improvised B sections. The TA group was encouraged to read the sheet music to learn to play a piece as the composer intended it.

The TA group focused on reading rhythms, treble clef notes, and recorder technique. This group followed protocol similar to that recommended in *Recorder Karate*, however the earning of “recorder karate belts” for each level passed was purposely left out of this study. This was because the inclusion of belts for the TA group and not the OA group would have made obvious

to students and parents that the groups were being taught in different ways. Classes would begin with a rhythmic reading warm-up followed by a playing warm-up of a piece they had already learned to play. The remainder of the class focused playing pieces on recorder that grew in difficulty. Some were folk songs that students knew from childhood, and others were pieces with no lyrics. Students were encouraged to practice six days a week for five- ten minutes at a time. This group learned the steps to practice, and could recite them for practice at home. The steps, as taught by the *Recorder Karate* method are:

1. Clap and Count the rhythm using rhythm syllables.
2. Clap and speak the letter names in rhythm.
3. Finger the notes and speak or sing the letter names in rhythm.
4. Play the notes in rhythm. Start slow and increase in speed later. (Philipak)

During class time, we would work as a large ensemble to practice the pieces, as small practice groups, and with individual practice time. The small recorder groups followed the method prescribed by the *Recorder Karate* method. The students in each group were given a job to facilitate cooperating and on task time. The jobs are:

1. Starter - Starts group by saying "1, 2, ready go."
2. Stopper - Stops group if they hear a problem.
3. Fixer - Corrects the mistake.
4. Checker - Makes sure the mistake was fixed (Philipak 4).

The time given in small practice groups varied in success. Working in groups easily facilitated my ability to quickly assess each student in the class as well as aide with their practicing. From my perspective, I felt that the small groups were a welcome change from whole class instruction and gave them an opportunity to work together. However, in a follow-up survey

given to all the students in the study, some students had some differing opinions of the small group practice. When asked about their least favorite part of music class, some responses on the topic of small group practice were:

“In music I least like playing in small groups with my riser group, because most or all of the time they aren't focused on the task at hand and I'm afraid of being thought of as not participating and get in trouble as well” (Traditional Student 1).

“[My least favorite activity is] small group recorder practice. I do not like it when people in my group start to fight about their jobs” (Traditional Student 2).

“I really do not like small group recorder practice” (Traditional Student 3).

“I don't like small group recorder practice because nobody can concentrate” (Traditional Student 4).

“I don't like going into small groups because some people don't get along and it causes a lot of arguments. I think we should pick the people who we want to be in our small group so that we don't argue” (Traditional Student 5).

While only one student mentioned enjoying small group practice, I can assume that there were others who had neutral feelings on the groups. However, the negative responses given show that at least several students did not enjoy an approach recommended in *Recorder Karate*.

One possible reason could be that students in the TA group did not have much opportunity to work on their teamwork skills in class. The only time they worked together was during small group practice. For the most part, it is not musical reasons they mentioned for disliking the groups, but rather interpersonal reasons. I wonder had these same students had more opportunities to work together in music, as is typical in an Orff classroom, if they would have been able to work together with greater ease.

One concern I had with the TA group was that they were not being given enough opportunities to explore other musical avenues. The students in this study had an Orff-Schulwerk approach to their music education up to the point of this study. Therefore, they had already experienced a rich, lively, creative music environment. Now, for eight weeks, the TA group moved into more of a “pre-band” experience and was expected to solely play recorder from sheet music as their main experience.

One student echoed this sentiment in their survey saying, “I wish we had more of a variety of instruments, not just recorder. Thankfully, we can choose our instruments in 5th grade. But some people don't like recorder so they will be bored for most of fourth grade” (Traditional Student 6). This student also rated their overall experience a three. Another student said that they wished they could “run around more” and their favorite part of music class was when they got to play “music games” and their least favorite part was “playing recorder songs” (Traditional Student 7).

Other students were missing their old experiences as well. One commented that “what I most enjoy about music class is that we play fun musical games and do dances sometimes” (this was an experience prior to the field study) and that what they liked least about music was playing recorder as “it’s not my type” (Traditional Student 8). It saddens me to know that there are students in my classroom and in other similarly run classrooms, who are feeling bored and unmotivated.

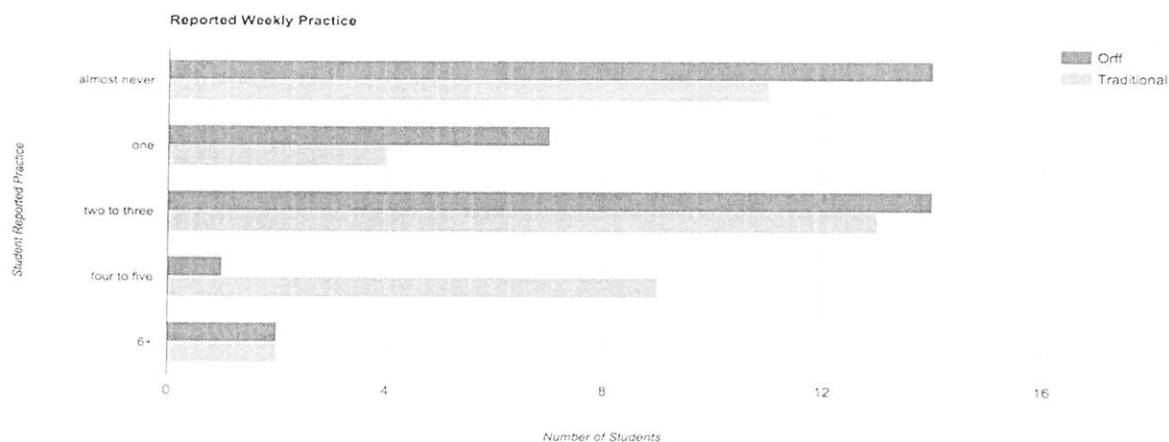
The TA group did foster a love of music in the students that already had a strong background in music. A student in the TA group that is also in the Orff Ensemble (an after school club), gave her experience a four and said-



I love everything about music class. I look forward to it every week. I try to practice six days a week but I am a little busy. Also most of the time I try to practice my mom tells me to stop because my brother can't play the piano while I'm blasting the recorder but I don't have much other time to practice recorder. Mostly the reason I love music is because of singing. My mom says I have a good voice and I'm always looking for a chance to improve my music skills (Traditional Student 9).

Another student, notably a volunteer member of Orff Ensemble as well, also loved playing recorder. She says "I enjoy playing new songs, and learning new notes because I never played recorder before fourth grade! I love playing recorder and I am 99.9% sure that I am playing a wind instrument in the future" (Traditional Student 10).

For some students, the TA experience seems to have built their ability to persevere and dedicate themselves to a task. One goal of a traditional recorder unit is to be a pre-band experience. It is intended to teach students to practice, responsibility, and grit. I observed that the students in this group were able to move relatively quickly through repertoire. This group also reported that 28% practiced between four and six times a week, as compared to the OA group that only 8% reported practicing as often. On the survey, students in the TA group said "It's almost like you're working hard on something, and when you pass that part, it makes you feel good" (Traditional Student 11) as well as "I've learned that playing an instrument is frustrating at first, but when you master it, it is more satisfying" (Traditional Student 12).



The students in the OA group had an experience that included folk dancing, improvisation, ear training, folk songs and games, singing and recorder playing. Every class started with five to ten minutes of folk dancing to get students moving, collaborating, and participating in a musical experience. From there, the class varied from week to week. The main focus though, was improvisational skills.

When this group was in third grade, they learned to sing and play the game for “Tideo”. It was spiraled back for this experience to teach question and answer (Q/A) improvisation. The OA group participated in an improvised vocal and instrumental performance of the poem “Daybreak”. This group also worked on singing and playing “John Kanaka”. Once they became accomplished with singing the song, and before being given the notation, students were given the task of using their aural skills to discover the notes on recorder.

One significant difference from the TA group was that the OA group rarely sat down in their riser seats. The minute they entered the room, we began folk dances. Students learned “Gustav Skol”, “Sasha”, “Seven Jumps”, “Polka Poussette” and “Alabama Gal”. Many of the students in the OA group expressed a love of folk dancing; it was clear from their faces how much joy they were experiencing. When asked about their favorite part of music, 66% of

students named folk dancing as something they loved. Only two students out of 38 said they did not enjoy dancing. When asked about their favorite experience in music this year, students said:

“I really enjoy the folk dances; they are very fun and spark laughter from a lot of us” (Orff Student 2).

“I like playing games, folk dancing, singing, and playing recorder” (Orff Student 3).

“Music class is fun. We do a lot of folk dances and play a lot of games” (Orff Student 4).

“I enjoy dancing with my friends because it has a steady beat and it's really fun” (Orff Student 5).

“Folk dancing is what I enjoy the most in music class” (Orff Student 6).

“I love doing folk dances! I used to not, but now I really like them” (Orff Student 7).

“I enjoy folk dances because it's a lot of movement instead of just sitting” (Orff Student 8).

While students in the TA group found group work difficult on an interpersonal level, students in the OA group mentioned it as one of the most enjoyable parts of the experience.

“What I enjoy MOST about music class is the folk dances because it really lets you collaborate with your peers. I have become closer to many kids in my class. I enjoy folk dances” (Orff Student 9).

“I like when we do the folk dancing because it is fun, active and you interact with people” (Orff Student 10).

“I really enjoyed doing the dances with my friends because when I danced with my partner, she swung me around five times when we were supposed to sashay down so we almost missed the sashay. It was a funny experience we had in fourth grade” (Orff Student 11).

As music teachers, we are not only educating them to be musical but we are also teaching them to understand themselves and their interactions with the world better. It is rewarding to hear that a student became closer with their classmates through experiencing a historical, musical tradition.

In the student surveys, folk dancing emerged as the popular star of the study, however the major pillar of the experience was to focus on improvisation. Students participated in solo and improvisation games such as “Cuckoo Where are You” and “Autograph”(King). These games gave the children a safe place to perform solos. In “Cuckoo” one player would echo the group playing or singing the melody to the song on notes G and E. Another player, with their eyes closed, tries to guess the child playing. Once students were comfortable with structured solos, we moved to “Autograph”. In this game, students would improvise a melody to the rhythm of their full names. The game was performed in rondo form, with the Autograph poem as the A section, and improvised solos as the B section. This boisterous game gave students the chance to improvise in a pleasant, joyful way, which included a build-in opportunity to assess playing ability and technique.

Through “Tideo”, students learned about proper Q/A technique and how it relates to speech patterns by creating improvised B sections. Over the course of the unit, students moved from improvising with notes GAB to the full G pentatonic scale- GAB DE. The game for “Tideo” is a mixer game, which gives students the opportunity to work with several classmates

in a short period of time and gives many chances to improvise new patterns. This eventually led to volunteer students performing solos and duets with Q/A in rondo form, with “Tideo” as the A section.

The guidelines for melodic improvisation in this study were:

1. Start and stop on do (G)
2. Visit do often
3. The melody should be easy to sing and easy to remember (to avoid large skip and encourage repetition)
4. For Q/A- the question ends on mi, so, or la, and the answer ends on do.

As students became comfortable with improvisation with structured parameters, it opened the door for a less structured experience. Students were shown a copy of the poem “Daybreak” (King). Students used pictures, lines, colors, and font sizes as inspiration for what to play, and how to play it for each design. Volunteers were also invited to pick small percussion instruments to illustrate chosen parts of the poem. This allowed students to freely improvise while creating a loosely structured performance.

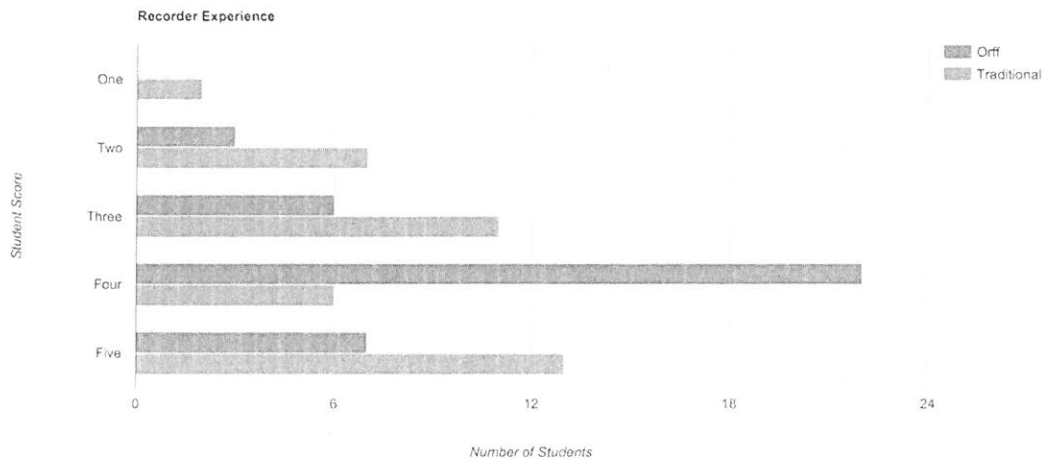
Of course, students need to have more playing experiences than just improvisation. When pieces of written music were learned, they were taught with the Orff-Schulwerk approach in mind. Pieces were sung, and students figured them out by ear whenever possible. For songs like “Lost My Gold Ring”, students discovered the form (rondo) and used speech blocks to learn the syncopated rhythms. Students in the OA group learned the rhythm much faster than the students in the TA group, which used Kodaly syllables.

Reading rhythmically is a skill that was encouraged in both groups; however the OA group used word syllables to interpret rhythms. When it came to reading notation, students had

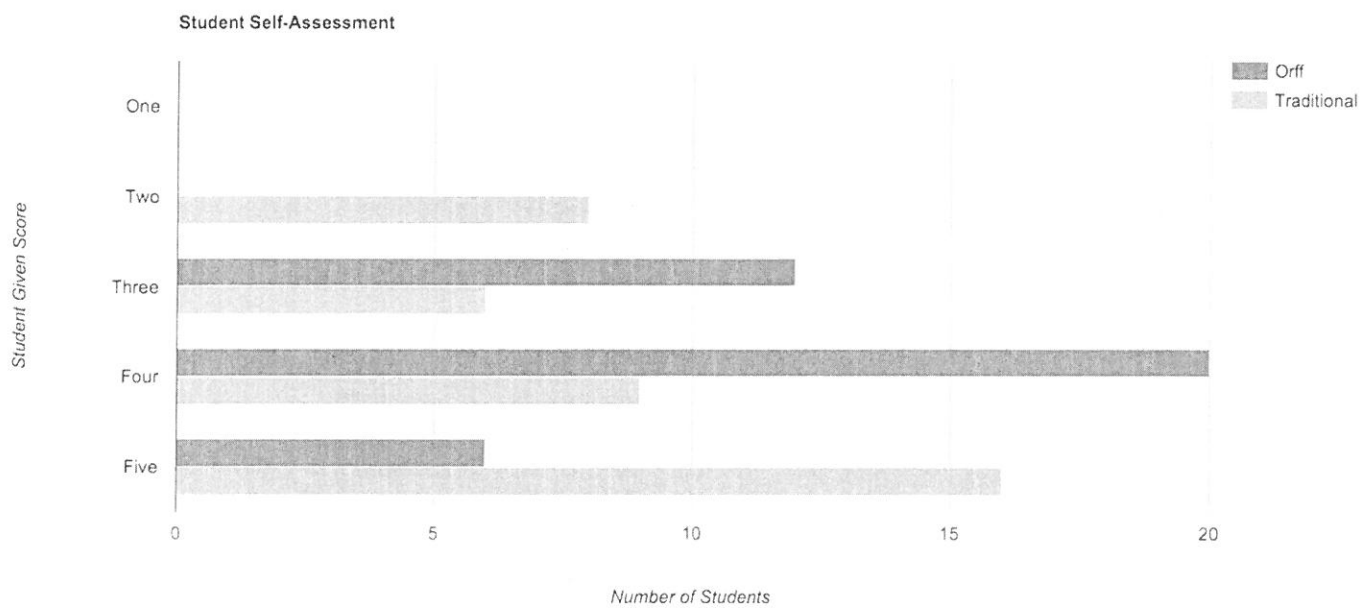
more consistent accuracy because they had learned the rhythms with word syllables by ear first. In my district, we have agreed that being able to read the pitches on the treble staff is not a priority in fourth grade. This meant that during the study students in both TA and OA groups were able to have the note names written in.

Jane Frazee says that improvisation is the key to measuring musicianship (“Artful” 2). During the post-assessments, the improvisation test clearly showed the level each student understood and executed concepts such as phrasing, melodic contour, fingerings, tonguing, and rhythms. The data from the pre and post-test showed dramatically different results in the area of improvisation. The TA students showed little overall growth- some even scored lower on the post-assessment than they did on the pre-assessment. The TA group only showed an increase of 5.6% at the post-assessment. The OA group on the other hand, having had many improvisatory experiences, had scores that increased tremendously- by 51%. It was no surprise that the TA group had virtually no change in score on the post-assessment, as improvisation had not been part of their instruction.

We know that students learn more when they are engaged and enjoying the experience. One goal of the study was to measure student motivation in class as well as at home. The survey data from the TA group showed a split in student satisfaction in their recorder experience. The TA group had the most students rating it at a five, but it also had 51% rating it as a three or lower. Conversely, 76% of students in the OA group rated it as a four or five and only 8% gave it a score of two and 0% gave it a one. The traditional approach is great for only some of the students in the class, leaving the rest lacking in the ways of enjoyment and motivation. The Orff-Schulwerk approach on the other hand, had over two-thirds of the class highly engaged and motivated.



This study looked at students' interpretations of their playing ability as well. Students were asked to rate themselves from one to five, one being "I have no idea what I'm doing" to five being "I feel confident I could teach this to another student". The data shows that 65% of OA students felt confident about their playing ability, rating it at a four or five. In the TA group, 64% rated it as high- a very similar result. Where it differs is the low confidence scores. In the OA group, there were no students that rated themselves as a one or a two. In the TA group, 21% rated themselves as a two on the chart. Just over one in five students in the TA group reported low confidence about their musical ability from their first serious instrumental experience. Just by teaching students with a more creative approach, that 21% could have felt successful and confident in their musical ability.





## Chapter 4: Conclusion

The opportunity to compare two philosophies of teaching recorder proved valuable and inspiring. The ability to concurrently study the effect on the student's musicianship and motivation has further strengthened my alignment with Orff-Schulwerk. This approach is the best way to reach the majority of the students in the class and to build up their confidence in their inner musician. However, at the same time, the TA group showed that they learned perseverance and dedication. Going forward, I feel that my classroom will be a blend of OA and TA. This blend would ideally consist of the Orff-Schulwerk approach for 80% and traditional methods for the remaining 20%.

I agree with Goodkin when he said that teachers must keep in mind that while it is important to build recorder technique and music literacy skills, it is not the end goal to build recorder experts. Rather, the goal should be to give students a meaningful experience to create music. Some students will love recorder, and we should provide continued experiences for those students (103). This study showed me that recorder does not need to be the absolute main focus of an entire school year. Rather a more valuable experience would be to keep the rich and diverse lessons the students have participated in since Kindergarten while weaving recorder into the curriculum. Students expressed that they felt most interested and successful when they were able to create and improvise their own music, rather than just performing another person's music.

Using improvisation as an assessment tool proved to be enlightening. It was clear from an improvisation which concepts students had accomplished and what they needed to work on. It was a low-pressure way to check fingerings, articulation, understanding of phrasing, rhythmic skills, and more. Improvisation proved to be indicative of more concepts than I had first expected when starting the study. If I were to revise the study, I would add more specific playing

technique parameters to the assessment rubric. This would have provided more specific data to show the growth of the student as a musician.

After reflecting on the study, there are areas that I would like to expand for future recorder experiences. The study focused largely on improvisation, which was eye-opening, but it is not enough. Students should have more opportunities to create beyond the soprano recorder. In the lower grades, students are often creating with movement, pitched and unpitched percussion, voice, etc. After this study, I feel it is important to continue to teach in a similar manner, and fold recorder playing into the mix.

Since my first folk dance experience at a music conference (I had no folk dancing in my childhood music experience!), I was hooked. It was fascinating to see how much the OA students came to love folk dancing as well. Starting class with dancing led to much higher participation in the rest of class, and students looked so much happier than students in the TA group. I have since begun folk dancing with every grade for the first part of class. In some ways, folk dancing became the big hitter of this study. It is a perfect way to teach numerous musical concepts, participate in tradition, as well as develop interpersonal and collaborative skills. Since the end of the study, the TA classes have been able to dance as well. They were thrilled to be moving and dancing!

The greatest source of information for this study, and for me as a teacher has come from obtaining all three levels of Orff-Schulwerk certification as well as regular attendance at Orff-Schulwerk workshops. This training has provided me with the knowledge and skills required to guide students through a creative and elemental approach to music. Before my training, I would have taught students the way I was taught- more similar to the TA approach. Through certification, I learned student-centered ways of teaching that made much more sense. As a

student, I never had opportunities to learn dictation or creative movement, and I struggled with rhythms and sight reading. I certainly would never have even touched the thought of improvising! Through approaches learned from my Orff-Schulwerk certification, I have improved my musicianship and, as a consequence, my students can now become better musicians. At the end of the day, we know that most of our students are not going to become professional musicians, but they are going to become adults out in our world. We want these adults to feel comfortable and adept in musical situations, feel the joy that music can bring, have a greater understanding of themselves, be creative, and be successful collaborators. The results of the study show that through the creative approach in the Orff-Schulwerk, we can move our children closer to that goal.

## APPENDIX A: Improvisation Assessment Rubric

### Rubric for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Improvisation on a Given Text

4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Recorder Rubric	“Yes” (4 points)	“Yes but” or Very Good (3 points)	“No but” or Good (2 points)	“No” (1 point)
Rhythmic Accuracy	Performs all rhythms with correct prosody of the text.	Performs rhythm close to correct prosody of the text.	Struggles to perform rhythms accurately.	Cannot perform rhythms accurately.
Melodic Accuracy	Starts & stops on do. Visits do often. Melody is easy to sing and easy to remember.	Starts and stops on do. Visits do sometimes. Melody is somewhat easy to sing and remember.	Starts or stops on do. Visits do occasionally. Melody is a bit jumpy.	Does not start or stop on do. Visits do rarely. Melody is not easy to sing or remember.
Note Accuracy	Uses pitches only in given pitch set as well as 5-6 of the notes in the pentatonic scale.	Uses mostly pitches from correct pitch set and/or 3-4 notes in the pentatonic scale.	Only plays 1 or 2 pitches in the pentatonic scale.	Does not show evidence of knowing the pitches in the pentatonic scale.

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey Questions

1. Which class are you in?

2. How often do you practice your recorder at home? Be honest, your answer is anonymous!

- more than 6 days a week
- 4-5 days a week
- 2-3 days a week
- 1 day a week
- I almost never practice at home

3. What would you rate your recorder playing experience?

1      2      3      4      5

I don't enjoy it

I LOVE it!

4. Please write about what you enjoy MOST in music class?

Possible options are: playing recorder songs, singing, small group recorder practice, improvisation, reading music, folk dances, music games (Tideo, autograph, cuckoo, etc). Something else?

5. Please write about what do you enjoy the LEAST in music class?

Possible options are: playing recorder songs, singing, small group recorder practice, improvisation, reading music, folk dances, music games (Tideo, autograph, cuckoo, etc). Something else?

6. How do you feel you're doing with recorder playing?

1      2      3      4      5

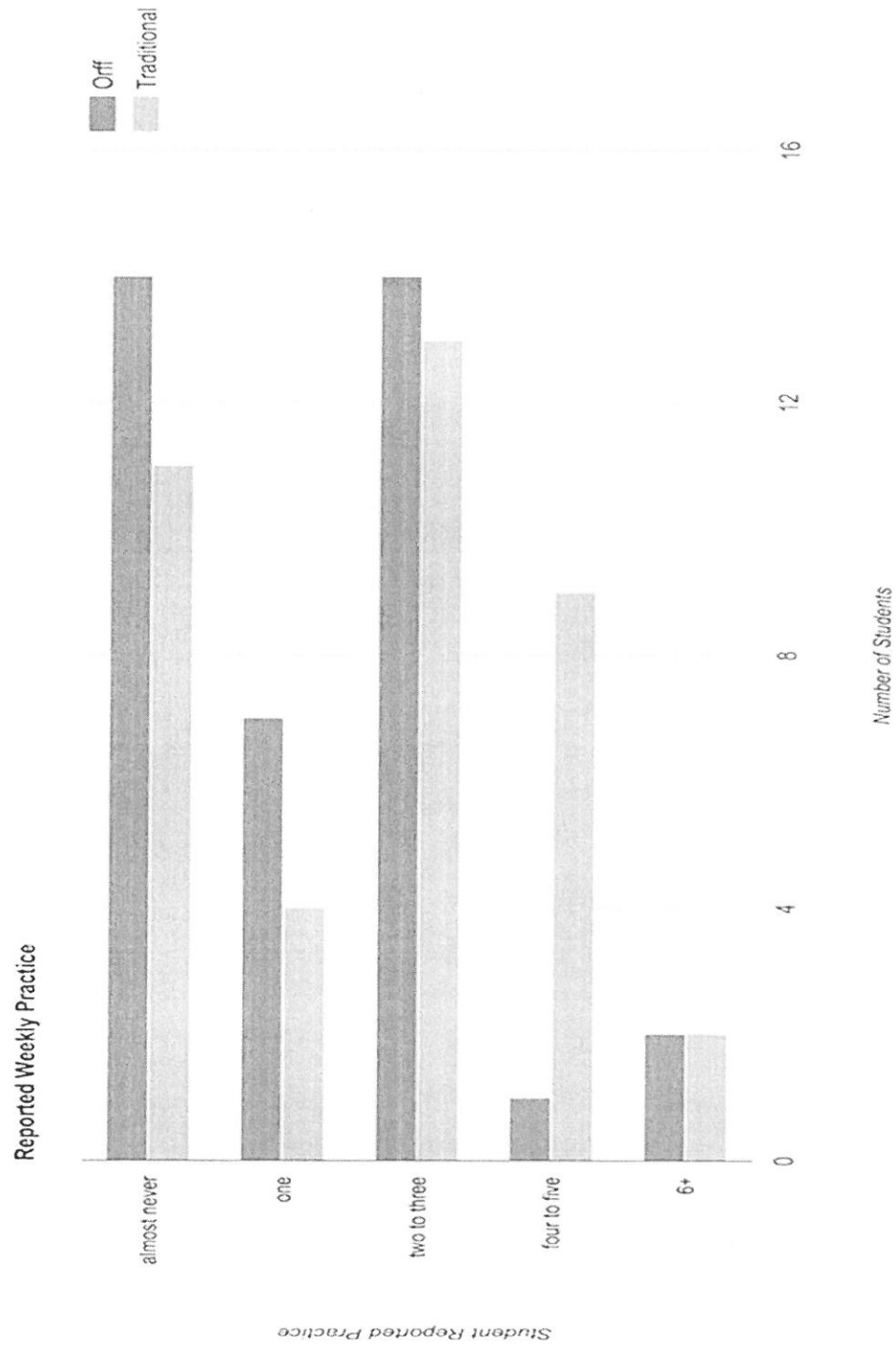
I have no idea what I'm  
doing

I feel confident that I could teach other people how  
to play a song on recorder.

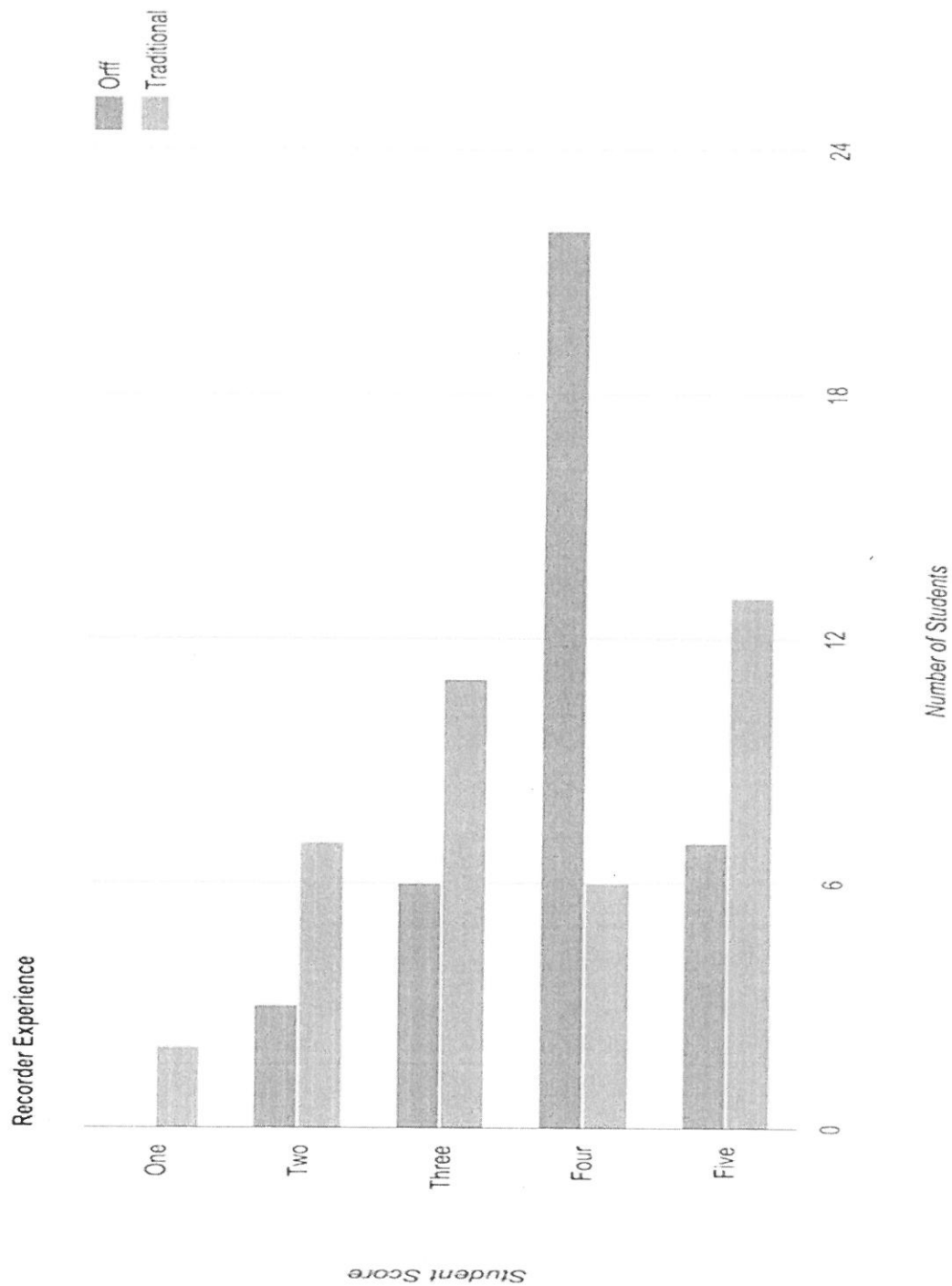
7. Is there something you wish we did in music that we are not doing?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your experience?

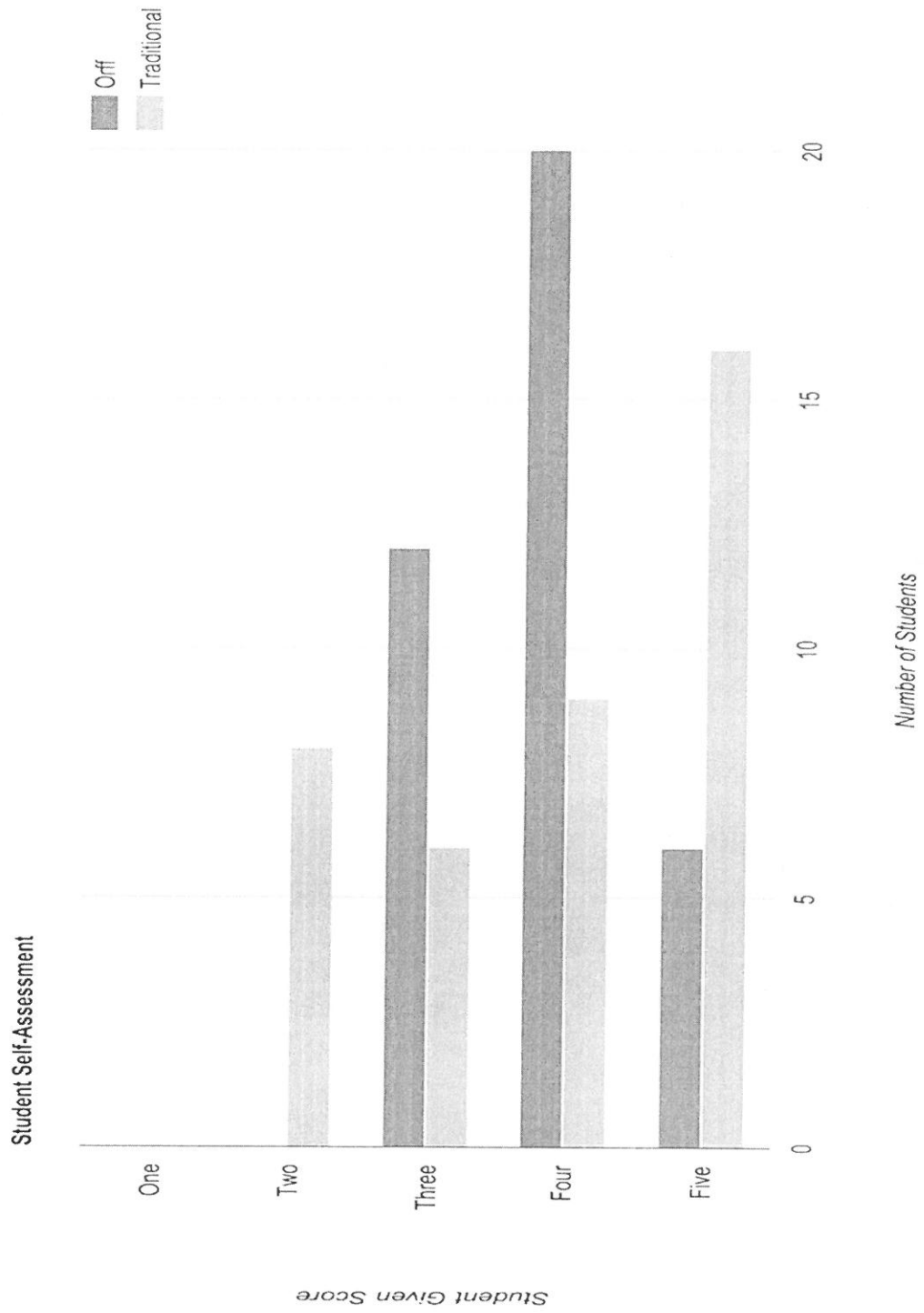
## APPENDIX C: Student Reported Weekly Practice



## APPENDIX D: Student Recorder Experience



## APPENDIX E: Student Self-Assessment





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