Effortless Play: Using the Schulwerk to Enhance Creativity

Workshop Presented by Matthew Stensrud
Detroit Orff Schulwerk Association
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There's always a place for creation – a folk dance with a twist, a chance to explore the xylophone, or an opportunity to see what your body can do with one word – but pulling these ideas from our students can be challenging. Let's go back to the Schulwerk roots of playfulness, discovery, and wonder as we explore these ideas and more through student-led choices, improvisation, risk-taking, and more. We'll unearth the unexpected, so join us on the journey!

A Mindful Moment

"A state of awareness and acknowledging one's feelings in the present"

- Coming together in a circle
- Taking a few breaths together as a group, in through the nose and exhale through the mouth
- Simple stretching, mirroring activities
- Explore and connect with a partner, mirror one another, pass off the mirroring through eye contact and a motion
- "Aquas de Amazonia: No. 1, Madeira River" by Philip Glass and performed by Third Coast Percussion on Paddle to the Sea
- Transition to "Demi Lune" by René Aubry on Plaisirs d'amour
- Use of *Loving-kindness* card from Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus, and Calm by Whitney Stewart and Mina Braun
- Something that brings you happiness today
- Something that brings you a feeling of anxiousness today
- Acknowledge these feelings are here
- Follow phrasing of music:
    - One hand on heart
        - May I be happy, may I be safe, may I be peaceful, may I be kind
    - Both hands on heart, gesturing toward partner
        - May you be happy, may you be safe, may you be peaceful, may you be kind
    - Both hands on heart, gesturing out to the world
        - May you all be happy, may you all be safe, may you all be peaceful, may you all be kind
- The Schulwerk is an essential place for connection and togetherness. Consider mindfulness, now more than ever, to create a safe and welcoming space for students. Taking time to acknowledge the place and feelings one is bringing to our space is essential to our own growth and the ability to take risks. This is also true for our students.

Creativity through Folk Dance

"The use of imagination or original ideas in production of art"

- Using the simple folk dance *Seven Jumps* to dive into creativity with students
    - Explore simultaneous exploration with increased difficulty while moving in a circle
    - Beat (pat, clap, step) during pulse
    - Pulls, shapes, touches during holds
    - 16 beats quick step walking in circle (add holding hands when ready but not at first)
    - Face circle on beat 16
    - Clap 3 times in front
    - Clap 3 times in back
    - Clap 3 times in front
    - Clap 3 times in back
    - Hold up body parts with music, in this order: right leg, left leg, right knee, left knee, right elbow, left elbow, head
- Many of us know and use this dance in the classroom with our young ones…but let's not stop there!
- Both how the teacher introduces the dance and opportunities for students to explore can enhance creativity.
- Student leaders → choose body parts as leader, change clap in front to something else, change clap in back to something else, explore with a partner and change leader/follower role, using ta-ti ta pattern, try choosing broccoli/cauliflower to assist with partner work in a fun "getting to know you" way
- Student leaders → next, try using breath to create poses, similar changing back-and-forth with partner after sound cue
- Small groups → two pairs become a quarter, create lines of students to follow each other and explore putting it all together, including a locomotor motion with a sound cue for "conductor" of train to become "caboose"
- These little snippets of creativity through a more formal 'model' can take the stress off the risk-taking and help students better define the places where they explore

Imagination through Unpitched Percussion

"The action of forming new ideas"

- Introducing the hand drum as passed down to me from Danai Gagne and Janie Vance
- Become the drum
- 4 beats movement → freeze as drum
- Find partner
    - Partner A: Drum
    - Partner B: Drummer
    - What if the drummer could add vocal sounds?
- 4 beats for A to create drum, 8 beats for B to play on drum
- Switch roles with partner, explore
- Switch roles in a form
    - A make drum (4), B plays drum (8)
    - B makes drum (4), A plays drum (8)
- What if A stays a drum and B stays a drummer *but* B travels to different drums each time?
    - A makes drum (8), B plays drum (8)
    - A makes new drum while B travels (8), B plays drum (8)
- Switch roles

- How can we travel?
- What if we add hand drums?
    - First explore with A always as drum → switch roles
- What if you could find a way to pass the drum to your partner?
    - A makes drum (8), B plays drum with sounds (8)
    - A passes drum to B who makes new drum (8), A plays drum with sounds (8)
- A field of drums!
    - What if As were drums in a beautiful field?
    - And Bs could travel through the field of drums and find one to play
    - Bs travel (8), Bs play drums (8), repeat
    - What if As could also transform their drums during the travel time?
    - Switch A and B roles and explore again!
- Always starting with exploration
    - *o* What could your drum be?
    - Explore with reaction exercises
    - What if your drum could help set a scene in a small group?
    - Share
- Adding a story
    - Press Here *by Herve Tullet*
    - Teacher-read story
    - Can you explore individually/as a whole class?
    - Where does the story take you?
    - Add sound when it seems right, play another person's drum when it seems right, use relationship words, locomotor, non-locomotor, **react to the story**
- Beginning technique
    - Table, wall, slide
    - Tap, tickle, scratch
    - Top of the slide, bottom of the slide
    - Top of the slide → upstroke
    - Bottom of the slide → downstroke
    - Downward thumb stroke closer to bottom of drum, making a circle with the hand and bouncing off the drum with a flicking motion of the heel of the hand near the thumb
    - Upward finger stroke with fingers 3, 4 and 5 close to the top of the drum, making a circle with the hand and bouncing off the drum with a lighter tapping motion
    - Explore 4-beat echo patterns using just upstrokes, downstrokes, then combining the two
    - Create patterns and echo with a partner *(great time for teacher to float and assist with technique!)*
    - Leads us to an elemental piece:
        - *Playing on our drum* (down-up up-up down)
        - *Playing on our drum*
        - *Tickle tickle scratch scratch*
        - *Playing on our drum*
    - What if you could think of a new b in this aaba pattern, maybe *scratch tickle scratch tickle*? What else could you make?
- Using *Patschen #14* from page 6 of Rhythmische Ubung to play an 8-measure pattern
    - Let's travel, let's travel, let's travel, to the moon. Let's travel, let's travel, let's travel, now!

    - Ta ta-ti ta ta-ti ta ta-ti ta-a (all upstroke except ta-a)
    - Play two times
    - Then, change the first ta-a to ta-ti ta (down-up down)
    - Also can be read as:
        - Up up-up
        - Up up-up
        - Up up-up
        - Down-up down
        - Up up-up
        - Up up-up
        - Up up-up
        - Down
- But how do we get to the moon? We need a rocketship to get us there!
    - How can a group of friends travel to the moon together? Things to consider:
        - Start in one place, end in another
        - Use your body
        - Use your voice
        - Use your drum!
        - Tell a story
- We've made it to the moon!
- Wait, what does our drum also look like? THE MOON!
- Become the Moon
    - What if your drum could become the moon?
    - Various moon images to consider
    - What stages of the moon do we have?
    - How can your moon smoothly move through the sky?
    - What if your moon appeared suddenly? What if it had a new sudden shape?
    - Explore sustained vs. sudden
    - Sustained → *in space*
    - Sudden → *in place*
    - Can you create an AB with two phases individually?
    - What if you found a partner and create a piece that uses four phases of the moon? Maybe abca? Or abac?
    - Two pairs connect for a group of 4 → share, watch, reflect, combine
    - How can you use symmetry/asymmetry and simultaneous/canonic movement to take this to the next level?
- Adding Music
    - *Seishu - Pure* by Jia Peng Fang
    - How does this impact your movement? How can we pass the moon phases around the room?
- Reflection
    - What did this look like in my classroom with 4th grade? Watch and reflect on experience

Discovery through Folk Dance

"The process of unearthing something unexpected"

- Discovering through Non-Verbal Cues
  - Playful shaking of hands becomes promenade
  - Clear sound effects for forward, stop, backward, dosido
  - Scaffold allemande
  - Connecting back to promenade with broad, extravagant motions
- Folk Dance → "Ozark Rag" from *Step Lively* collected and arranged by Marian Rose
  - Formation: Double circle with partners
  - A: CCW Walk, turning to partner on beat 8 (8)
  - B: Walk backward, away from partner (4), clap-clap clap (2), stamp-stamp stamp (2)
  - C: Dosido (8)
  - D: Allemande R, joining L hand at end for promenade (8)
- Let the Re-Discovery Begin!
  - "Ozark Rag" → Charleston-like feel
  - "Old Favorite" by The Assembly → snaps instead of claps, elegant allemande
  - "Symphony No. 94 in G Major, *Surprise Symphony*" by Franz Joseph Haydn → tiptoes, creeping, no snaps or claps or stamps, surprise at the end!
  - "Demi Lune" by René Aubry (considerations in 3/4) → three claps and three stamps, long, short, short with steps, flying-like feeling with allemande
  - "Respect" by Aretha Franklin → allemande becomes 16 beats, add hop out and in
  - "Mission: Impossible Theme" by Michael Giacchino (considerations in 5/4) → long, short, short, more sudden movements, feel in feet, quick spin for ending
  - "Happy" by Pharrell Williams → dance party time with addition of body percussion exploration
- Reflect
  - What does this look like in the classroom? How can song choices be student inspired?

Creativity and Connecting with Emotions through Stories

"The Color Monster comes to life"

- How are you feeling today? Happy or sad? Angry or calm? Giving students the opportunity to think more about their feelings and to drive the choices we make in class can be such an inclusive and student-centered experience.
- Let's explore The Color Monster by Anna Llenas. What colors connect most with you today? Oh, and we must meet our Color Monster Friend! Do you see our Color Monster Friend anywhere?!
- As we read…
  - Add in speech piece
  - Only say the color we just learned about!
- *Red Yellow Blue*
- *Black and Green are too*
- *Our emotions fill the colors*
- *Red Yellow Blue*
  - Yellow…blue…red…black…green
  - What if you could say the 5 color names but nothing else?

    - What if you could say everything?
- Add in the melody, taken from Music for Children, Volume I by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, p. 91 #1.
    - *Sol mi-re do*
    - *Sol-sol mi-re do*
    - *Sol-sol la-la do'-do' la-la*
    - *Sol mi-re do*
- Let's explore some words my second-grade students chose from our movement word wall that connect to each color:
    - Yellow: Dance, Hop, Skip, Dive, Spin, Glide, Bolt
    - Blue: Curl, Freeze, Shrink, Dissolve, Collapse, Rest, Fall
    - Red: Expand, Pose, Push, Crash, Stomp, Kick, Punch
    - Black: Tiptoe, Shake, Melt, Grasp, Slink, Halt, Creep
    - Green: Sway, Slide, Float, Walk, Perch, Swing
- What if each color also had its own song?
    - Yellow: *Happy* by Pharell Williams
    - Blue: *What Was I Made For?* by Billie Eilish
    - Red: *Day of Wrath* by Giuseppi Verdi
    - Black: *Night On Bald Mountain* by Mussorgsky
    - Green: *Morning Glory* by Jamiroquai
- Could you make a happy monster with our egg shakers, rhythm sticks, and hand drums? What would they look like? What about angry? Calm? Sad? Fearful?
- What if we explored all our monsters through a Museum Walk? What notices and wonderings might you have?

Creativity through Folk Dance, Pt. 2

"The use of imagination or original ideas in production of art"

- Explore chopping, sliding, scooping, stirring, and more while reacting and listening to ASMR cooking sounds → Mushroom Risotto *(idea inspired by Drue Bullington, used with permission)* → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrsY2FUkSYs&t=1s
- What else can we do? → Begin to make patterns with these motions
- Inside friends grab rhythm sticks, outside friends grab mixing bowls
- What can you and your partner create together?
- Exploring adding music and improvising some choices
- Every other pair turn around, share with one another
- If you turned around, switch places with your partner!
- Stir with your partner → stir with someone new!
- What if you could stir both bowls?! Becomes a circle!
- Dance (choreographed by Matthew Stensrud, inspired by Haste to the Wedding from *Chimes of Dunkirk* by New England Dancing Masters, used with permission)
    - A:
        - Circle L (8)
        - Circle R (8)
        - Dosido partner (8)

        - Dosido opposite (8)
    - B:
        - Stir with partner (4)
        - Rhythm sticks click / bowls flip (4) “turn it over”
        - Tap utensils on bowl (4)
        - Rhythm sticks click / bowls flip while turning to face opposite (4) “turn to someone new”
        - Stir with opposite (4)
        - Rhythm sticks click / bowls flip (4)
        - Tap utensils on bowl with opposite (4)
        - Rhythm sticks click / bowls flip while walking right shoulder past opposite to new opposite, staying with partner, getting ready for circle L (4)
    - What else could you and your partner explore during your B section? Improvise and see!

Playfulness through Creative Movement

“The quality of being light-hearted or full of fun”

- Egg Shakers
    - Keeping the play alive while…
        - Passing out
        - Picking up
        - Silence to sound
        - Start and stop
        - Isolating body parts
        - Teacher-led exploration of egg shaker ‘controlling’ a hand
    - Movement with a Partner
        - One person: egg shaker; one person: following with hand
        - What if we considered around, through, above, below, curve, straight, zig zag?
        - What if we explored other body parts to follow the egg shaker?
        - Sound cue = change roles
- Movement Improvisation
    - Pairs grow to groups of four
    - What if the egg shaker was your whole body?
    - Explore in a diamond
    - Sound cue = pass egg shaker to next leader
    - Music → “Mazkur Witch” by Artuan de Lierrée and Thiaz Itch from *Music for Toys #5*, 2013 and “D’un pas si facile” by René Aubry from *Invités sur la terre*, 2001.
    - What if you could become an egg?
        - How would it open?
        - What would it become?
        - What would you discover inside your egg?
    - What if your group could become an egg together? What would you discover inside your egg? What if you considered near/far, meet/part, connected/alone?
    - Music → “Tanjoubi” by Honoka Sakai and Kawaii from *Music for Toys #5*, 2013 and “Invités sur la terre” by René Aubry from *Invités sur la terre*, 2001.

Discovery through the Xylophone

“The process of unearthing something unexpected”

- Let’s have the egg join us at the xylophone!

- Polyspots
    - *o* Using polyspots to set up the xylophone in C pentatonic
    - *o* Notice the use of primary and secondary colors for do, mi, sol and passing tones. Visual connection for students!
    - *o* Teacher and student-facilitated play on the spots with feet help students explore the xylophone and better discover steps, skips, repeated notes, and more
    - *o* Discovering the *Spielstucke #8* from Erstes Spiel am Xylophon by Gunild Keetman
        - A piece using all-steps is a great way to dive into the xylophone
        - Colors – yellow, blue, red – can be really helpful for teaching the bass drone to students!
- *Erstes Spiel am Xylophon*, #12 by Gunild Keetman
    - *o* *Crickle crackle goes the little egg today*
    - *o* *Crickle crackle goes the little egg today*
    - *o* *What's inside?*
    - *o* *Open and we'll find*
    - *o* *Clickle clackle goes the little egg today*
- Process
    - *o* Use polyspots for the egg to hop on!
    - *o* Follow the egg on your xylophone
    - *o* Keep the playfulness alive!
    - *o* Learning the piece:
        - Begin with *What's inside* (A A G_)
        - Add *Open and we'll find* (A-A A-A G_)
        - Add *Crickle crackle* (G-G G-G)
        - Add *Clickle clackle* (A-A A-A) – almost the same!
        - Add *Egg today* (E D C_)
        - Add *Goes the little* (G-E- D-C)
    - *o* Ostinato: *crickle, crackle, clickle, clackle* (C-C' D-C' E-C' G-C')

Wonder through Literature

"A feeling of surprise mingled with admiration"

- You have a new egg! Inside each egg are some ideas to consider: movement words, melodies, rhythms, instrument ideas, relationships, and a way to transform
- What if you could share what's inside your egg using these ideas?
- Group work on unearthing the story of their egg
- A story appears to put the many pieces of our egg together…
- First the Egg by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
    - o First the egg, then the chicken
    - o First the egg, then the tadpole
    - o First the seed, then the flower
    - o First the caterpillar, then the butterfly
    - o First the word, then the story
    - o First the paint, then the picture
    - o First the chicken, then the egg
- Putting it All Together
    - o Rondo form = *Crickle crackle* → The story of a transformation → *Crickle crackle*

Suggested Additional Materials

Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE, and Other Special Areas from Responsive Classroom.
A Complementary Combination: Responsive Classroom and Orff Schulwerk, "*The Orff Echo*", Spring 2014, by Matthew Stensrud.
"5 Simple Ways to Incorporate Responsive Classroom Ideas into Orff Schulwerk," *Reverberations*, January 2015, by Matthew Stensrud.
"Settings Students for Success," *Bluegrass Music Online*, Summer 2019, by Matthew Stensrud.
Chimes of Dunkirk by New England Dancing Masters.
Sashay the Donut by New England Dancing Masters.
Yoga Pretzels: 50 Fun Yoga Activities for Kids and Grownups by Tara Guber and Leah Kalish
Erstes Spiel am Xylophon by Gunild Keetman.
First the Egg by Laura Vaccaro Seeger.
Nian, The Chinese New Year Dragon by Virginia Loh-Hagan
Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus, and Calm by Whitney Stewart and Mina Brown.
Teaching Movement & Dance by Phyllis Weikart.

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Matthew Stensrud is an award-winning Elementary Music and Movement Teacher and currently teaches PK-4 music and movement at Sidwell Friends Lower School in Washington, DC. He received his Master of Music Education from George Mason University and Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, is an Orff Schulwerk approved Teacher Educator of Movement, and teaches Movement Levels in Portland, Oregon and outside New York City. Matthew is currently on the National Board of Trustees of AOSA as Representative for Region V, was previously on *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board, and was a key content contributor to the book *Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE and Other Special Areas*. He is also well-known on social media as @MisterSOrff on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, and offers newsletters through this website www.mistersorff.com and mentoring, lesson plans, and more on his Patreon page, www.patreon.com/mistersorff. Contact me via Instagram, Facebook, text message - anytime!

In Friendship, Matthew

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