

# The Application of the Orff Schulwerk Approach to Improve the Pedagogical Competency of Teacher Candidates

Susi Gustina

Department of Music Education, Indonesia University of Education, Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi no. 229, Bandung, Indonesia

**Keywords:** Orff Schulwerk; Exploration; Pedagogical Competency; Teacher Candidates.

**Abstract:** The Orff schulwerk is one of the creative approaches in the music learning process. The aim of this approach is to develop the sense of ‘pulses, meters, tempos, and rhythms’ physically by expressing those elements of music through movement and music activities. In our research, we propose to apply this approach to improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates that will be needed when they have to teach music in school. By using the method of action research, teacher candidates are treated to apply this approach. The findings is the understanding of Orff schulwerk approach in the music learning process is depend on the teacher candidates’ confidence to express their musical ideas freely. The result show that the more freely they expresses their musical ideas through exploration activities, the better the improvement of their pedagogical competency in teaching music. The conclusion is the application of Orff schulwerk approach can improve the teacher candidates’ pedagogical competency as long as they understand that teaching music in school is not to make professional musicians, but to foster the characters of students that related to the educational goals in the school curriculum of Indonesia, i.e. the students character building.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Music cannot be separated from the human life. The fact, music is enjoyed and learned by the peoples all over the world, both formally and informally. Related to the reality, Hargreaves, Marshall, and North stated that, “Music has cognitive, emotional, and social functions for all of us: and the social functions of music are manifested in three main ways in everyday life, namely in the management of selfidentity, interpersonal relationships, and mood.” The same perspective of the benefit of music is stated by Susan Hallam (2010) that the general attainment may be influenced by the impact that music has on personal and social development.

*Playing an instrument can lead to a sense of achievement; an increase in self-esteem; increased confidence; persistence in overcoming frustrations when learning is difficult; self-discipline; and provide a means of self-expression. These may increase motivation for learning in general thus supporting enhanced attainment. ... Participating in musical groups promotes friendships with likeminded people; self-confidence; social skills; social networking; a sense of belonging; team work; self-discipline; a sense of accomplishment; co-operation; responsibility;*

*commitment; mutual support; bonding to meet group goals; increased concentration and provides an outlet for relaxation (Hallam, 2010).*

In music education, the specific goal of using music can build the atmosphere of learning needed to improve the teaching and learning activities. Based on the benefits of music in education, there are some methods or approaches offered by some experts of music education. One of the approaches that more focused on learning music creatively and related to the children life is the Orff schulwerk that pioneered by German Composer, Carl Orff (1895 – 1982), and his colleague, Gunild Keetman (1904 – 1990). Orff schulwerk can be said as an approach to music education (Cunha and Carvalho, 2012; Long, 2013). Its foundation was concerned with the child: the needs of the child and the emphasis on nourishing the musicality of each child through elemental activities in music and movement. The Orff teaching process involves singing; body percussion; playing on a variety of both tuned and un-tuned instruments; movement and dancing; and speech activities to encourage active music making. It can be said that the practices of Orff schulwerk approach is important to learn because it highly focus on music learning actively. The purposes of this method are to develop

the sense of ‘pulses, meters, tempos, and rhythms’ physically by expressing those elements of music through movement and music activities (Stewart, 2013). The output of this approach relies heavily on the teacher as a facilitator in the learning process. Teacher is one of the important elements in the learning process in every stage of education. Like Stewart, Southcott (2012) also stated that.

*Orff believed that music education for young children should start as early as possible and that such education should not be delivered through mere singing or instrument playing but through the involvement of the whole body. The Orff pedagogical strategies enable children to learn music through constantly integrated mental, physical and sensory engagement through the experiences of moving, singing, chanting and playing instruments.*

The Department of Music Education, the Faculty of Art and Design (FPSD), the Indonesia University of Education (UPI) is the one of the higher education institutions that provide music education for teacher candidates in school. Based on our survey, many teachers in schools have many problems, especially when they are required to teach that combine music with other arts, i.e. dance, visual art, and theater, such as the art and culture lesson in 2013 Curriculum. Because the Orff schulwerk approach involves music and movement as well as speech activities so that its application in school can be seen as a solution to improve the teacher candidates’ pedagogical competency.

The problem in this research focus on the application of Orff schulwerk approach. Some questions that need to be solved are: 1) what kind of the Orff schulwerk approach that can be used to improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates?; 2) how teacher candidates can apply the Orff schulwerk approach in music learning?; and 3) how about the impact of teacher candidates’ understanding to the Orff schulwerk approach in the improvement of their pedagogical competency?.

The objectives of this research are: 1) teacher candidates have a better understanding to apply the Orff schulwerk approach that can be used to improve their pedagogical competency; 2) students as teacher candidates know how to apply Orff schulwerk approach in music learning, and 3) the understanding of Orff schulwerk approach gradually can improve teacher candidates’ pedagogical competency.

This research was taken place in the Department of Music Education, FPSD UPI that located in Bandung City, West Java. The participants of this research were some students as teacher candidates who attended the course of the Music Learning

Methodology as a subject that must be studied by all of the students.

## 2 RELATED WORKS / LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic about the Orff schulwerk approach have ever written by some researchers. One of them is Stewart (2013) in her master thesis, Facilitating Elemental Composition in an Orff Classroom. In her research findings, Stewart explained that.

*the most successful pedagogical strategies that facilitated successful outcomes for this group of students were: creating a safe and supportive environment; facilitation of collaborative learning; encouraging and empowering the children to make connections to, and draw on, their previous learning; facilitating opportunities for in-depth reflection by the peer group and the students themselves; providing constructive feedback and feed-forward; the provision of sufficient time and opportunity; the use of humour; teacher modelling; ensuring the aims and expectations are clear and managing classroom behaviour (Stewart, 2013).*

Stewart’s findings above showed that the teachers who have a good pedagogical competency in music learning at school are those of who understand about the Orff schulwerk approach so that they can empower their students’ musicality in the classroom. Unfortunately, she did not explain about music teachers or teacher candidates who were unfamiliar with it. Differ from Stewart, in our study (Gustina et al, 2017), teacher candidates are introduced to the Orff schulwerk approach that focus on improving students’ creativity. As their pedagogical competency increase then they can create a safe and supportive environment; facilitate collaborative learning; encourage and empower the children to make connections to, and draw on, their previous learning; facilitate opportunities for in-depth reflection by the peer group and the students themselves; and so on.

Other findings of Stewart’s research is related to Orff media and Orff pedagogy. In her thesis she stated that,

*In investigating the general nature of activities, this study found that the most successful were those that: explored Orff media and utilised Orff pedagogy; energised and focussed the participants; involved the children in practical music making where they were using their whole bodies to sing, move and play; were scaffolded and allowed children to enter at a level that was comfortable for them; had clear links to both the short and long-term goals; and made links to children’s*

*lives and experiences. The specific activities that the students found most successful were those that explored ... and provided opportunities for improvisation and the playing activities, with both body and untuned percussion (Stewart, 2013).*

Stewart’s statement above clearly describe the music teachers who have many experiences in teaching music with Orff schulwerk approach to achieve the goal of music learning. They understand that music learning is not only limited to singing or playing an instrument, but can also involves other media that links to children’s lives and their experiences, such as their body and un-tuned percussion. But, based on some survey that we have ever observed at the pre-schools and kindergartens in some regencies in West Java, such as Cirebon and Garut, generally teachers did not realise that the students’ body or un-tuned percussion can be used as learning media. Differ from Stewart, in our study, teacher candidates are treated to do some explorations that related to the Orff schulwerk approach, i.e. the exploration of sound, space, and form that appropriate to the ability of students in school (Gustina et al, 2017).

According to Stewart (2013), Orff schulwerk is a child-centred approach to music education, which uses songs, dances, rhymes, clapping games, poetry and stories from the child’s world as the basis of music and movement activities. Carl Orff, originator of the approach, called this music and movement activity “elemental” – basic, unsophisticated, concerned with the fundamental building blocks of music and movement. Therefore the Orff schulwerk approach can be categorized as an approach that uses student-centered paradigm. The same perspective with Stewart, the research of student-centered paradigm has been done by Gustina et al in 2006. In this research Gustina et al concluded that studentcentered paradigm can improve: the motivation of students in the learning process, the sensitivity to ‘feel’ the elements of arts (sound, movement), the creativity in making music, and the ability to solve problems. The results of this study showed the lack of teachers’ ability to manage music learning in the classroom with many students by using studentcentered paradigm.

Based on both studies it can be said that there are three major obstacles in implementing the Orff schulwerk as student-centered approach, i.e. the teachers’ understanding of the approach itself, the using of learning materials that is based on the students’ lives and experiences, and the ability to manage the Orff schulwerk approach in the active music making. These obstacles indicate that there is a

‘gap’ that can be ‘covered’ by doing another study that focuses on the application of the Orff schulwerk approach to improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates (Gustina et al, 2017).

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Data

In this research, data was collected by observation to the exploration done by five participants, both in individual and group participation. Data consist of three kind of exploration according to the Orff schulwerk approach, i.e: exploration of space, sound, and form. Data of each explorations is analysed in qualitative approach. The exploration of space explained the improvement of all participants to explore the qualities of movement, such as light, heavy, down, up, in, out, and so on (Choksy et al, 2001).

Participant	Exploration of Space (the qualities of movement)	Evaluation
1		
2		
3		
4		

The exploration of sound describe the improvement of participants’ ability to play and experiment with sound qualities, such as hard sounds, soft sounds, wood sounds, metal sounds, and so on. The first instruments are not of necessity any standard ones, but rather natural instruments found or invented by the participants, such as bottles, tables, chairs, etc. The sounds produced on these ‘unusual’ instruments are organized into simple forms that demand beginnings and endings and involve a sense of duration within defined limits. Sound sources are grouped into families of like sounds and the whole is worked into “pieces” not for performance but for growth and development to the next stage of exploration (Choksy et al, 2001).

Participant	Exploration of Sound (experiment with sound qualities)	Evaluation
1		
2		
3		
4		

Data in the exploration of form occurs concurrently with the exploration of space and sound. Movements are organized into patterns, and patterns into dances. Sounds are organized into compositions with like and unlike phrases, introductions, and codas. The shapes of movement and sound are diagrammed and symbols are invented to represent them (Choksy et al, 2001).

Participant	Exploration of Form (shapes of movement and sound)	Evaluation
1		
2		
3		
4		

### 3.2 Method

The research method that used is the action research. Ferrance (2000) stated that, “action research is ... or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Rather than dealing with the theoretical, action research allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make change”. In this kind of research, we will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action (Ferrance, 2000). Following the Kurt Lewin’s model, we conduct our research in three cycles. Each of the cycles involve planning, action, observation, and reflection. The three cycles of our research can be described as follow:

Table 1: The First Cycle

PLANNING	ACTION	OBSERVATION
Exploration of Space	To explore the qualities of movement	The participants actions in exploring the movements



Table 2: The Second Cycle

PLANNING	ACTION	OBSERVATION
Reinforcement of the First Cycle		
Exploration of Sound	Play and experiment with sound qualities	The participants actions in exploring the sounds



Table 3: The Third Cycle

PLANNING	ACTION	OBSERVATION
Reinforcement of the Second Cycle		
Exploration of Form	The shapes of movement and sound are diagrammed and symbols are invented to represent them	The participants invention to represent their shapes of movement and sound



## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

The research is started with the explanation about the Orff schulwerk to teacher candidates. Differ from other music learning methods, the Orff schulwerk approach focus on three kind of explorations, i.e. exploration of space, sound, and form. This approach also involve speech and the using of non-Western instrument, such as gamelan.

The result of this research consists of three elements, i.e. the exploration of space, sound, and forms. In the exploration of space, the participant are encourage to explore the qualities of movement, such

as light, heavy, down, up, in, out, and so on. Body positions are explored and experienced, without discussion and without teacher-imposed definition.



Figure 1: Exploration of Space The participants do some qualities of movement

In the exploration of sound, the participants play and experiment with sound qualities, such as hard sounds, soft sounds, wood sounds, metals sounds, and so on. The first instruments are not of necessity any standard ones, but rather natural instruments found or invented by the participants, such as bottles, tables, chairs, etc. The sounds produced on these ‘unusual’ instruments are organized into simple forms that demand beginnings and endings and involve a sense of duration within defined limits. Sound sources are grouped into families of like sounds and the whole is worked into “pieces” not for performance but for growth and development to the next stage of exploration.



Figure 2: Exploration of Sound: The sound from a glass plate and a fork



Figure 3: Exploration of Sound: The sound from human voice and body



Figure 4: Exploration of Sound: The sound from a pen that being knocked against the wall



Figure 5: Exploration of Sound: The sound of a pen rubbed against the bottle

The exploration of form occurs concurrently with the exploration of space and sound. Movements are organized into patterns, and patterns into dances. Sounds are organized into compositions with like and unlike phrases, introductions, and codas. The shapes of movement and sound are diagrammed and symbols are invented to represent them.



Figure 6: Exploration of Form A participant do some movement patterns into ‘dance’ and the others response his ‘dance’ with sound into a ‘composition’

A diagram that represent the shapes of movement and sound that produced by the participant in this research.

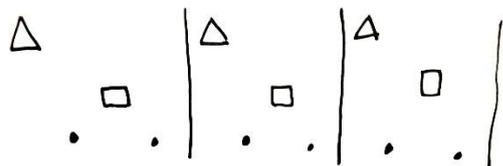


Figure 7: The diagram with symbols that represent the movement and sound

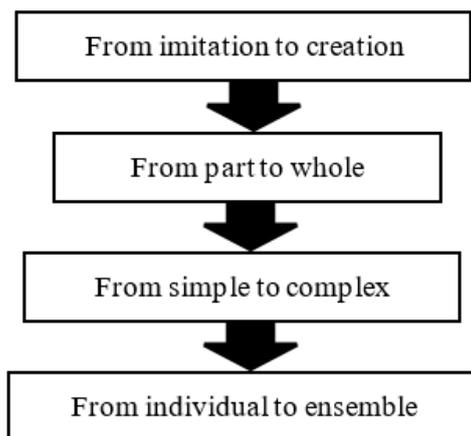
Notes:

- = both hands are above the head with the sound from a glass plate and a fork (high sound)
- = both hands are at the waist with the sound of a pen rubbed against the bottle (medium sound)
- = walking movement with the sound of foot that hit on the floor (low sound)

## 4.2 Discussion

Based on the result, it can be said that all the participants in this research have a variety of their ability to explore the spaces, sounds, and forms. At the beginning in exploring the sound, for example, they looked confused to find some sound sources which can be identified as ‘music’. Their confusing can be understood based on some reasons. The first is their assumption that music only related to usual instruments, such as guitar, piano, keyboard, and violin. The second is their assumption that they will teach music in school with usual activities, such as singing, playing instruments, or choir. They have no idea that all sources, including their body, can be used as sound sources. It shows that their understanding of ‘what music is’ still limited. The participants also have some weaknesses in exploring the form at the beginning. The main of weaknesses of the participants are the lack of confidence and the ability to express musical ideas freely.

The ability to express musical ideas as well as explore sound and space are the important elements of Orff schulwerk approach (Choksy et al., 2001). Sound exploration which involves musical elements, such as pitch, rhythm, dynamic, and tempo developed from the simple forms and gradually experimented through practical experiences. Furthermore, those elements are refined and developed to exploration and experience in more difficult levels. And, at each steps of the process the participants will practice.



The same with Long (2012), in this research, all the participants did the same pattern in all exploration, i.e. observe – imitate – experiment – create. First, the participants started to observe the teacher, music, videos, other students, or any other forms of watching someone actively “do” something and indicated the pitch, duration, dynamic, tempo, and timbre of it (observation). Second, they work on developing basic skills in rhythmic speech, singing, body percussion, playing instruments, and movement by following the teacher's example (imitation). Third, the participants can discover and explore the possibilities available to them in both sound and movement (experimentation). Finally, the participants are extending the skill as to the point where they can initiate their own patterns spontaneously (creation). Choksy et al (2001) also stated that the pattern is repeated for each new concept presented. In the process of individual to ensemble, although the participants must discover the qualities of space, sound, and form for themselves, each individual simultaneously contributes to the group as a whole, and that community of individuals becomes the ensembles (Choksy et al, 2001).

The result shows that the confidence and courage of the participants to express musical ideas gradually increased after practicing this approach in the process of learning. Therefore, it can be said that Orff schulwerk approach is useful to achieve some goals, such as: 1) to support a sense of togetherness or community, 2) to understand the music organization, 3) to understand music as art, 4) to develop musical freedom, 5) to strengthen the development of individual musical, 6) to perfect the play capability, 7) to develop the self-confidence, and 8) to increase students’ appreciation. Stewart (2013) stated that because of its benefit, refer to Orff pedagogy, the pedagogical strategies that can be successfully used are: creating a safe and trusting environment that

enabled learner to take risks; allowing time for reflection, feedback and feed-forward; facilitating group learning; the importance of sound classroom management; setting goals and challenging the children to extend their learning; teacher modelling; and the importance of using humor as a tool to facilitate learning.

Based on the result, we assume that the Orff schulwerk approach can be used by the teacher candidates when they have to teach in schools. In accordance to the 2013 Curriculum, music is not studied separately, but integrates with other fields, i.e. dance, visual arts, and theatre. Therefore, this approach can be seen as a solution for problems that faced by many teachers in school today. So, our hypothesis in this research is the application of Orff schulwerk approach is not only beneficial to the improvement of teacher candidates' pedagogical competency, but also useful to support educational goals in the school curriculum of Indonesia, i.e. to develop the characters building of students in school.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

In this research it is clear that that the activities taught using the Orff schulwerk approach can improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates, especially in the art and culture lesson in 2013 Curriculum. Unfortunately, this research have not specified the application of Orff schulwerk at every stages in school yet. We only tried to improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates, but we have not tried to find a solution on how this Orff schulwerk approach can be applied at every level in the school. It can be seen as a 'gap' for the future research. The main shortcomings of what we have done is the duration of treatments in this research. It can be assumed that the more often the application of this approach is treated, the better teacher's pedagogical competency will improve. However, based on the results, we believe that the Orff schulwerk approach has benefits for the development of students' character in school. And, with the application of the Orff schulwerk, we can realize that teaching music in school is not to make professional musicians, but to foster the characters of students that related to the educational goals in the 2013 Curriculum, i.e. the students character building. Therefore, we hope that there will be other researches that also focus on the same topic as an effort to improve the pedagogical competency of teacher candidates.

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