Inclusion and Elemental Music[1]

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Alcuni lettori saranno forse sorpresi di scoprire in questo numero dedicato alla didattica dell'insegnamento delle lingue in gruppi eterogenei un articolo conclusivo sull'inclusione e la musica. Shirley Salmon, una collega inglese che ha lavorato per molti anni con bambini e con adulti a Salzburg e a Graz, vi descrive la teoria e la pratica delle idee di Orff sulla formazione inclusiva, applicabili anche alla didattica delle lingue straniere. L'autrice offre una rapida introduzione all'insegnamento del compositore tedesco Carl Orff che non era stato pensato dapprima per allievi handicappati ma per persone di età diverse e di diversi livelli di competenza. Egli mirava a esplorare vari percorsi, personali o di gruppo, in cui teatro, danza, movimento e musica conducono ad espressioni artistiche personali scoperte individualmente o in gruppo. L'improvvisazione e la partecipazione sono di primaria importanza. Un handicap in una data area può essere compensato da compiti diversi che permetteranno all'individuo di utilizzare le sue idee e i suoi talenti in vista di un risultato collettivo. Cantare e recitare sono attività che offrono molte possibilità a bambini con competenze e esigenze diverse. Tutto ciò può sembrare idealista e teorico ma Salmon offre esempi di adattamento a vari strumenti musicali che possono essere trasposti all'insegnamento delle lingue. Lo scopo centrale della ricerca di Orff è di permettere al bambino di esprimere le sue idee e i suoi sentimenti personali. In secondo luogo si tratta di aprire la strada della creatività e dell'espressione artistica di modo che ognuno si senta parte di un gruppo, evitando così l'isolamento o l'esclusione. Il fatto di dare a ogni bambino la possibilità di portare il suo contributo ad un lavoro di gruppo sfruttando i suoi talenti personali è fondamentale per qualsiasi tipo d'insegnamento inclusivo.

> "The disabled person also does not live on bread alone but has the same right to enjoy life as the so-called normal or talented. Musical enjoyment is an irreplaceable element in finding harmony and balance in one's personal as well as social life".

This statement from Wilhelm Keller from the year 1974 has not lost any of its relevance. Keller recognised that each person had a right to music, happiness and integration. With his reflections and demands he was years, if not decades, in advance of integration and inclusion movements (Keller, 1996). Inclusion is a human right that accepts the difference between people as a natural and creative part of life and the right to equal opportunities to participate in all areas of communal life. Although the ideas of Carl Orff und Gunild Keetmann were not conceived specifically for children with disabilities their significance in special education and social work was soon recognised, developed and documented. The idea of working with people of all ages and abilities was inherent in Orff and Keetman's conception of music and movement education known as Orff-Schulwerk.

Elemental music making is a concept of active and creative music practice for everybody. It is "the realisation of an original, central musical potency anchored in each individual" (Keller, 1984). It exists independently from any determined age or from special talents or disabilities. It is the musical interactivity of persons with their individual capabilities. As each player receives an individual suitable role or assignment he/she can take part as a fully fledged member of the group. It enables so-called normal, talented and disabled people to play together in one group without any participant being under or over-challenged by adapting tasks and roles to suit the capabilities of the individuals instead of the group having to adapt to a fixed form (Keller, 1996).

The elemental is something in its own right, "being expressed as a result of a prevailing need" (Jungmair, 1992). Within musical activities, musical targets such as learning and accompanying a song, learning the words, playing or inventing a melody or rhythm, learning different kinds of ostinati, can play a central role. On the other hand extra-musical targets such as, for example, broadening perception, motor activity training, body awareness, language or social learning can be important. It is often possible to compensate for a disability by using other senses or abilities that are not affected. Each person has their own individual experiences, interests, and capabilities with music when receiving (listening), when reproducing (singing songs and playing pieces) and when producing (creating) music.

Multi-sensory Experience

In 1963 Carl Orff wrote: "Elemental music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance and speech. It is music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, uses no big forms, is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and to experience it, and suitable for the child" (Carl Orff, 1963/2011)

In this multi-sensory approach in which we play, sing, move, dance, listen, recite and much more, several senses can be addressed which in turn support children's general development. A stimulating, rich multi-sensory environment during childhood is of great importance for the development of the abilities and competences an adult needs later in life. "Experiences and sensations are learning. Sensations form the base understanding from which concepts and thinking develop. Sensory enriched environments are imperative to learning" (Hannaford, 1995:48). The inter-play between physical activity, emotional expression in movement, coordination of movement with language and singing, synchronisation of the movements within the group and many other elements are essential to this learning process which is supported by an enriched sensory environment (Hannaford, 1995). Orff-Schulwerk can offer activities that can address many senses: the visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and vestibular. This is often important for students whose sensory integration is still developing; the loss or underdevelopment of one sense can be often compensated by other senses.

Impressions from the *outer world* (the environment, nature, art, human relationships etc.) are perceived with many senses and then processed emotionally and cognitively in one's *inner world*. The resulting forms of expression may arise as a spontaneous and direct reaction or be deliberately formed through longer phases of experimentation and composition (Haselbach, 2002). For some students the spontaneous form of direct expression of feeling, 'authentic self-expression' in, for example, experimentation, exploration and improvisation, may be their main or only possibility. With others, creative processing of impressions can lead to artistically created expression where invention, composition and rehearsal lead to a finished piece. In the transition from impression to expression "our teaching should include a rich but not over saturated stimulation (…) and offer material that is varied and of relevant interest to the students, and in a form that is realistic and artistically created so that it promotes perception and stimulates emotional and cognitive processing" (Haselbach, 2002:80).

Learning by Playing and Improvisation

In 1932 Carl Orff wrote: "What is important is to let the child develop its own playing and to keep away anything that might interfere; word and sound have to be created from rhythmical play by way of improvisation (...) The urge to play develops into a patient activity leading to practice and from there to achievement."

The rediscovery of the significance of learning by doing and the motivating and necessary scope for improvisation was decisive for Orff. To release this scope is a significant task of elemental music making. So that a child can develop its spontaneous playfulness, space is necessary within which his/her own scope can be created. It is not enough to satisfy the need for security but rather a "space" must provoke the desire to play, must have an atmosphere of play and offer familiarity. To create, release and make scope available does not mean to offer complete freedom. The acceptance of a framework as well as rules is necessary (Jungmair, 1992).

Play and discovery are important in all development – and also in musical development. As we know from various artists, writers and composers, limitations or specific borders are often necessary to promote creativity. Rules can give stability and security and something to hold on to (Gertrud Orff, 1984:52). Play is a precursor to playing games and needs to be given space during phases of exploration and experimentation. For some students rhythmic or metric playing is not (yet) possible; they play pre-rhythmically and often pre-melodically. This is usually a free rhythmic flow without pulse and structure, or there is musical expression but no recognizable melody that can be repeated by the student. Before children express themselves in rhythmic forms that we know, they will play in a pre-rhythmic style; if rhythmic playing does not develop it may be the result of motor or developmental difficulties (Gertrud Orff, 1984:43). Our challenge as teachers is to find individual appropriate tasks for such students so that they can still play a meaningful role in group activities.

Wilhelm Keller refers to "compensation by upgrading minor roles" in which a simple action or task is given a pivotal part, e.g. a child who is challenged but can master playing 3 strokes on a gong can be given the task of introducing the piece or song. Students who cannot play or accompany rhythmically but can create the effect of, say, falling and dancing leaves on their barred instruments, are given the task of improvising parts of a rondo while other students sing and accompany an 'Autumn Song'. In improvising the student can produce that which is momentarily possible for him/her at their moment of individual development. While some students may be able to invent, remember and notate a melody using a five-note scale, others may spontaneously play 'their' melody on the given notes while others accompany perhaps playing a drone (Salmon, 2007, 2008). In vocal work, finding and using sounds with the mouth and lips and not just sounds with the voice can be important; kazoos can then be particularly stimulating for using the voice even for those with little or no speech. On the theme of 'Autumn' students can find their own sounds or words. For students who are

either unable or unwilling to learn the melody of a song but who can speak and remember the text, inventing their own melody can be particularly motivating.

A disability does not necessarily go hand in hand with un-rhythmic playing, singing or speaking. Many children are capable of complex rhythmic or melodic playing that is not the result of conscious imitation but rather played spontaneously. For these students, activities that use imitation of the teacher's playing are often not possible; here learning can be encouraged by the teacher imitating the student. Of course, students' participation is not limited to imitation. It can be helpful in planning activities for inclusive classes to consider other **forms of participation**: perceiving, exploring, experimenting, playing, communicating, recognising, remembering, choosing, varying, distinguishing, improvising, inventing, practising, creating, reflecting and discussing.

Play-songs

Play-songs offer children at pre-school and primary school age a great range of possibilities which can be extremely beneficial to them. In a multi-sensory approach the play-song serves as an initiating as well as an encouraging factor for a diversity of activities involving music, movement, language and a selection of play materials, which in turn lead to a variety of learning experiences. Different objectives can be aimed at – those concerning music directly, as well as other fields of development. Improving language skills may be one of the goals but the children should also be offered the possibility to gain different experiences, playing, moving, speaking, singing and creating in a variety of forms. In the play-song, music, movement, language and play(ing) are closely related and can influence and support each other positively. Play-songs can be songs based on dialogue, in the form of sung communication, as well as narrative and cyclic songs. The object here may not only be to sing the melody, but also to enact, to play and to experience the story-content, thus involving the whole body and, for example, interacting in the group, communicating with each other, discussing, creating, practicing and sometimes performing. In both music education and music therapy songs in general as well as specific play-songs can and should be adapted, altered and re-written according to the particular setting. Every play-song is used somewhat differently in different groups, depending on the requirements and abilities within the group in question. In music education, in remedial and inclusive education, in special education as well as in music therapy composed songs play a justified role. *Situational songs* are also used referring to the current situation, which usually leads to their quite spontaneous creation – **for** a child/group, **with** a child/group or **by** a child/group. Songs that develop as the result of a certain situation are reactions and answers to children and can lead to further playing, improvisation, reflection and discussion. They can accompany children in their actions, they can create atmospheres and help to improve understanding, interpretation and creative work with certain experiences. Situational songs are important for all children, but particularly valuable to those who do not speak, those who are hard-of-hearing or those with contact behaviour difficulties (Salmon 2008).

Greeting and Farewell Songs often provide the framework for the sessions. The primary aspect of many play-songs is for the children to enjoy the activity, the elements of play, the ritual as well as the real context that the particular theme in question has to offer.

Not only in music and movement education but also in integrative pedagogy and special education, songs that inspire movement, dance, role-play, language and emotional expression can be valuable especially in cross-curricular activities and with groups or classes of mixed ability. The story of a play-song can also be of focal interest, as play- (or dramatic) songs have a scenic core which can be stylised or enacted. Integrating songs into a dramatic plot or a picture book story opens up diverse possibilities of activity beyond that of singing and speaking. This may include dance, movement or forms of drama, vocal and rhythmical inventions, musical effects, making music, accompanying, instrumental improvisation or musical role-playing.

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Instruments

Many instruments used in music education and music therapy belong to the family of "Orff instruments". Un-tuned and tuned percussion and other elemental instruments use many senses, are technically relatively easy to play, are body aligned (do not separate the players too far away from the instrument or from each other), and are suitable as solo as well as group instruments not only for interpreting pieces but also for experimentation and improvisation. Carl Orff encouraged the constant search for new sound possibilities and suitable material for elemental, physically related music making. Additions to the Orff instruments can be the instruments of Latin percussion or also traditional instruments that can be played in an elemental way. Sonorous natural objects (e.g. stones, nuts), everyday and household objects or elemental instruments such boomwhackers, kazoos, recorder mouth pieces, and swanee whistles and many others can also be used. It is often a challenge to find suitable instruments for children with specific disabilities, to enable them to participate at their own level.

Instruments are there to make music and accompany and stimulate movement but they can also adopt other functions. Gertrud Orff sees instruments also as go-betweens: "The association of an instrument with an object or an action extends the capacity of the senses. This association has a communicative character" (Gertrud Orff, 1974). Instruments and sounding objects impart sensuous impressions and empower individual expression, can activate, encourage, stimulate and motivate. Moreover, they serve as means for establishing contact - to oneself, to the instrument and also, through the instrument, to others. In pedagogy and therapy, instruments and sonorous objects are mediums that can build a bridge between the individual inner and outer world. They further encounter and enrich non-verbal and musical communication with other players and may also stimulate language and speech.

For children with motor difficulties or a physical disability it is often necessary to adapt instruments or sometimes to find or invent new ones. This can sometimes mean finding a special stand for an instrument or enlarging the end of a mallet so that it can be held more easily. Playing an ocean drum may be possible for a student who cannot play a drum; playing glissandi on a mallet instrument may be possible where playing single bars is not. Stringed instruments may provide opportunities where mallet instruments are not suitable: lyres can be tuned to different scales, a stringed psaltery can be plucked or bowed; a thumb piano/kalimba or a sansula are often tuned to a particular scale or chord and are played by pressing down the metal 'tongues'. For students not able to play chords on a guitar, an autoharp can be a good alternative. Wind instruments may include recorders or melodicas or even just the mouthpiece of different sized recorders for various effects. Kazoos can be motivating, especially for students who are shy of using their voice or have no spoken language. Finding appropriate instruments can be challenging for the teacher but can also inspire imagination and open up new ways of playing and creating. Students in the group who already play an instrument and have a wealth of musical experience also need a challenge and need appropriate tasks at their own level.

Inclusive Pedagogy

Following the principles of inclusive education, lessons should include all students in a class or group while taking into account their individual abilities, interests and needs. According to Georg Feuser integration is a "cooperative (dialogic, interactive, communicative) activity in the collective" (Feuser, 1997).

From a pedagogical point of view, this means that

- "all participants (including those who have a disability or complex learning difficulties) play, learn, and work together
- at their respective developmental levels (taking into consideration their present levels of competence in perception, cognition and behaviour)
- in cooperation with one another
- on a theme, activity or task
- within a shared curriculum (project/subject matter/topic)" (Feuser, 1997).

  (The term "integration" was used here by Feuser before the concept and term "inclusive" had been widely established. The definition here applies equally to "inclusion".)

Elemental music and movement education can offer a wealth of activities, which enable **all** students to encounter and work on a topic in an individual way. Certain activities are carried out in a whole group, others in small groups, with a partner or individually. Feuser refers to factors that are necessary for implementing successful integration/inclusion:

- the setting of tasks appropriate for the individual through "individualisation" and "internal differentiation"
- working with others in "cooperative activity" on a joint theme working on a "common object" which is here not an educational subject but the central "process".

In every learning process there is the aim to activate each child's abilities in the best possible way. By extending and enhancing the learning environment – and the other students with their diverse competences contribute to this – a positive development is more likely to be achieved than with teaching methods that aim to speed up the learning process based on the deficits diagnosed (Athey, 1990:76). Teaching and learning methods which enable the students to make their own experiences are of central interest.

Elemental music and movement education as in Orff-Schulwerk provides a particularly well-suited basis for diverse activities involving and integrating music, movement/dance, language and the visual arts in groups of mixed ability. This work can be interdisciplinary in its concept and inclusive in its realisation providing the topics in question are prepared with the appropriate level of differentiation. In planning lessons the students' individual needs, abilities and interests are taken into account – a developmental form which is creative and open for adults and children alike.

It is important that all children (including those with disadvantages or disabilities, with different mother-tongues and cultures but also those with special talents) are given the opportunity to access music and movement, to take an active part and to experience expressive and creative forms. Music and dance enable contact and encounter, can provide the feeling of belonging together and are above all social activities which should be available for all of us. Through access to the arts and to artistic activities and through our inner and outer (e)motions, we can enable students to be part of the group and preclude isolation.

In a sense, we all have "special needs": The need and right to non-segregation and to be recognised and accepted as an individual.

The need and right to learn in a way that respects our individual forms of learning, our deficiencies, talents, our communication and conditions of life as well as consideration of our possibilities of interactivity with our environment.

The need to experience music, dance and language and the right to find our own creative forms of expression.

(This article is adapted with permission from *Musicworks 2010*, the journal of the Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk.)

Endnote

[1] A slightly shortened version of the article 'Inclusion and Orff-Schulwerk' published in: Musicworks. Journal of the Australian Council of Orff Schulwerk. Sydney Vol. 15 2010 p. 27-33.

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