

American Orff-Schulwerk Association

Handbook for the Digital Mentor Program



Compiled by Professional Development Research
Committee of the AOSA National Board of Trustees

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Introduction

The Digital Mentorship Committee (formerly the Professional Development/Research Committee) of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association has created this handbook. The handbook provides an overview of AOSA's Digital Mentor Program for both mentors and mentees.

One of AOSA's primary missions is to present high quality teacher education training in the form of summer training courses, annual conferences, and support of local chapter meetings. However, it is clear that Orff Schulwerk teachers need continued support when they return to their professional teaching positions. Process teaching procedures which seemed perfectly clear and logical when experienced with other in-service professionals may appear less obvious when an individual implements them in their classroom. Level I participants may benefit from the advice of a more experienced teacher when lessons do not go as planned. Level II and III participants may benefit from guidance when presenting more sophisticated musical skills and concepts for the first time. Research shows that direct and consistent communication between a qualified mentor and mentee can yield positive and beneficial results.

The objective of the Digital Mentor Program is to pair experienced Orff Schulwerk teachers (mentors) with newly trained Orff Schulwerk teachers to improve the practice of those who request mentorship. Because the 21st century brings cost-effective and innovative ways of communicating across long distances, discussions between mentor and mentee will occur primarily through digital media (such as e-mail, online chat sessions, video conferencing, and digital video recordings.) This does not, however, rule out live observations if they are feasible for both parties.

Requirements for Potential Mentees

1. Potential mentees must have a current AOSA membership.
2. Applicants must have completed an AOSA approved level course (Level I, Level II OR Level III) within two years of the application date.
3. Applicants must have at least 1 year of teaching experience.
4. Individuals must complete the online application to be considered for the program.
5. Upon approval of the application by the Digital Mentorship Committee, the mentee will be paired with a mentor and contact information will be provided to each participant.
6. As they begin, the mentee and mentor have the opportunity to craft the goals, type of interactions, and schedule of the experience in a mutually agreeable fashion. This includes:
 - a. Expectations for a schedule of communication, observation, and interaction
 - b. Observation format – digital video or live Skype/FaceTime exchanges
 - c. Procedure for exchange of documents and feedback (lesson plans, written reflections, online discussion)
7. Upon completion of the program, the participants will be asked to submit an electronic evaluation of their experience.

Areas of Focus

There are several possible broad areas of focus during mentorship experiences.

Project Oriented

These mentorships will focus on the skills needed in preparation of a particular project. Such projects might include the preparation and performance of a Schulwerk-oriented concert or demonstration.

Pedagogy Oriented

These mentorships will identify areas of pedagogical need and work specifically on improving the mentee's pedagogical preparation, process/delivery and evaluation of content material in a specific curriculum area or grade level. Goals can include: expansion of repertoire, lesson development, and/or evaluation and improvement of composition/arranging skills.

Organizational Oriented

These mentorships will focus on building important organizational skills in areas such as classroom management, musical ensemble development and management, and equipment care and management.

Regardless of the focus of the mentorship, both parties will mutually develop a set of needs and goals to be accomplished through the mentorship.

About the mentors

Mentees who complete the application process will be paired with an experienced Orff Schulwerk teacher as their mentor.

Each mentor:

- is a current member of AOSA who submits an application by August 15
- is a practicing or retired educator
- has completed Level III of an Orff Schulwerk teacher education program (or equivalent training in elemental music study)
- has completed post-level III training such as master classes, conferences, curriculum and supplemental course work, graduate/doctoral work, presenting at local and national conferences, Orff levels instruction
- has a minimum of 5 years teaching experience post Level III completion
- has a minimum of 10 years teaching experience in public or private education in the subject or grade level areas for which mentorship is requested
- agrees to provide mentorship in one or more of the areas below:

Grade Levels:

- Early childhood (pre-school and kindergarten)
- Primary (Grades K – 3)
- Intermediate (Grades 4 – 6)
- Middle School (Grades 6 – 9)
- High School (Grades 9 – 12)

Subject Areas:

- Basic Pedagogy
- Recorder
- Movement
- Singing
- Instruments (pitched or unpitched)
- Composition/Arranging

Mentorship Program Terms

Digital contact between the two parties will take place at least once per month during the duration of the experience, with a record being kept of the date, length, and subject matter of each digital contact.

Those participating in the mentorship program will organize their observations and communications as follows:

1) Initial conversation (via phone or video conference): October

The purpose of this communication will be to provide the parameters of the experience for both mentor and mentee. The goal of the experience will be outlined, and the means of communication will be established, as well as the expected outcomes for both parties.

2) Three to five (or more) discussions and observations: October-April

These observations will include digitally recorded lessons or live observations through internet software followed by a discussion including the mentor's observations and feedback. The mentee will provide a lesson plan or description of objectives to the mentor prior to any discussion of the observation.

Suggestions and recommendations will be recorded and goals set for the next observation as appropriate. The observations should take place regularly over the course of the mentorship and conclude by mid April.

3) Closure Discussion: May

In this conversation, outcomes of the experience will be evaluated by both parties and recommendations made to the mentee for continued exploration and practice.

4) Reflection & Evaluation: June/July

Both the mentor and the mentee will complete an online evaluation of their experience. The link for this evaluation will be sent via email from the Digital Mentorship Committee.

Technology & Equipment

Both parties of the mentorship must have appropriate facility with and access to digital technology, as outlined below. Use of other technologies is encouraged when appropriate. The following list suggests possible ways to communicate.

1. Computer with high speed internet
2. Web camera or digital video camera
3. Smart phone
4. Video conferencing application (Skype, Zoom, googleplus, facetime, etc.)
5. YouTube – personal channel for posting videos
6. An e-mail account with attachment capabilities

Additional Information:

If you have additional questions regarding the Digital Mentorship Program, please contact mentor@aosa.org.