

American Orff-Schulwerk Association

Handbook for the Digital Mentor Program



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

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Introduction

This handbook has been created by the professional development committee of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. 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 graduates may benefit from the advice of a more experienced teacher when lessons do not go as planned. Level II and III graduates 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 or teacher educators (mentees), for the purpose of improving 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 should have completed an AOSA approved level course (Level I, II, III) within two years of the application date.
3. Individuals will complete the [online application](#) to be considered for the program. Mentees may request a mentor from the approved list.
4. Upon approval of the application by the Post-Level 3 Committee, the mentee will be paired with a mentor and contact information will be provided to each participant.
5. 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)
6. Upon completion of the program, the participants will be asked to submit a reflection statement and evaluation of their experience.

There are three 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.

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.

About the mentors

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

- will be a current member of AOSA who has been recruited and approved by members of the Post-Level 3 and Professional Development Committees
- may be practicing or retired educators
- will have completed Level 3 of an Orff Schulwerk teacher education program (or equivalent training in elemental music study) and post-level III training through Master Classes, Conference attendance, or graduate study
- has had a minimum of 10 years teaching experience in public or private education in the subject or grade level areas for which mentorship is requested

- have agreed to provide mentorship in one or more of the individual grade and subject areas below:
 - Early childhood (pre-school and kindergarten)
 - Primary Grades K – 3
 - Intermediate Grades 4 – 6
 - Middle School (Grades 6-9)
 - High School (Grades 9-12)
 - Recorder (all ages)
 - Movement (all ages)

Mentorship Program Terms

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

1) Initial conversation (via phone or video conferencing): July/Aug

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: throughout school year

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

The mentor will send a narrative reflection to the Professional Development Committee chair. The mentee will also file an evaluation sheet that will gauge their perceived success of the experience.

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.

1. Computer, monitor and printer - either Windows or Mac/Apple operating systems, preferably with a web cam
2. Broadband internet connection - DSL, Cable modem, or T1 line access

3. Word processing software - MS Word or equivalent word processing program
4. Video recording - digital video camera, tablet or phone with video capability
5. Chat Software – iChat or equivalent
6. Video Conferencing application - Skype, FaceTime, Google+ or equivalent
7. PDF reader - Adobe Acrobat or Apple Preview
8. An e-mail account with attachment capabilities. It is suggested that a special e-mail account solely dedicated to e-mail correspondence be set-up with any free e-mail service, such as Gmail, Yahoo, etc.

Additional Information:

If you have additional questions regarding the Digital Mentorship Program, please contact [Jim Solomon](#), Chair of the AOSA Post-Level Three Subcommittee.