

IMPACT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND THE ORFF APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

As a music education methodology, Orff and the five domains of social emotional learning can combine together into an embedded curriculum, providing the best of both worlds in educational philosophy and methodology. The purpose of this study seeks to demonstrate there is a clear connection between the development of fourth-grade students who receive an SEL-embedded Orff approach versus students who receive an Orff-only approach in music education. The integration of an SEL-embedded Orff approach would create a new and innovative style of teaching that seamlessly transitions both elements of the Orff approach in music education and SEL components into one succession of positive student development. There is a distinct need for further investigation on the outcomes of an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education and the research findings should matter greatly to music educators, classroom teachers, principals, professors, Orff level instructors, and curriculum writers, as they will greatly impact future learning strategies, curriculum development, and teacher implementation. This research is the first step toward understanding that an SEL-embedded Orff approach promotes more social and emotionally-aware and musically skilled students, which will then further promote positive outcomes in a student's life development.

The problem statement: Is an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education more effective than merely an Orff-only based teaching method?

Research question 1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

Research question 2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

Research question 3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and

experimental group? The research uses a mixed methods approach with a convergent process, in which both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed during the same time period. This mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both research designs with a greater breadth and depth of research analysis. This approach also allows for diverse data collection options that implement the instruments of the qualitative and quantitative designs. With both control and experimental fourth-grade classes, the researcher utilized student and parent focus groups, a researcher teacher field notes journal, weekly lesson performance rubrics, student surveys, and student artifacts to answer the three research questions.

Key research findings include the following for research question one:

There was a significant difference in mindfully musical language between the control and experimental groups.

Key research findings include the following for research question two:

There was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups. The student surveys did not show significant differences as both the control and experimental groups demonstrated growth.

Key research findings include the following for research question three:

There is a direct correlation between the three research questions and how they collaboratively work together within an SEL-embedded Orff approach. When embedded together, Orff and SEL work together to create a mindfully musical experience for students. They move beyond musicality and the SEL domains of Identity, Belonging, and Agency (Edgar, 2021), to mindfully musical. Future steps can include the creation of SEL and Orff-embedded lesson plans for music teachers. The publication of articles, curricula, and books to educate teachers on this vital path for music education. The implementation of higher education courses to guide pre-service

teachers with the tools necessary for an SEL-embedded Orff educational program. An SEL-embedded Orff approach clearly provides students with an invaluable tool to promote both higher-level musical training, but also a critical piece of emotional and behavioral childhood development.

Keywords: Orff Approach, music education, social emotional learning, SEL, musically mindful, SEL-aware, musically aware, mixed methods

DEDICATION

This labor of love is dedicated to my best friend and husband, Steve. Your patience, encouragement, support, and love during these last two years were saint-like. You never failed to cook every dinner, give so many solo baths to our boys, and be their constant while I researched, read, attended countless zoom classes, and endless hours of pen to paper. I thank you.

I love you.

Greyson and Bodhi: Two pieces of my heart that run around and smile outside of my body. You grow so fast and yet I still view you as my little babies that I rocked safely and deeply in my arms. My love for you both is eternal. I hope you know you can do more and be more than your wildest dreams. I hope this work will set that example for you. All my love, always.

Shannon, my brother: I did this for you. Every word of this work is for you. It is an outpouring of the love and grief that commingle in my heart as I continue this life without you. You were always so proud of my accomplishments, so this Mount Everest climb is for you. I miss you deeper than the oceans and I love you stronger than the force of gravity.

“Grief, I’ve learned, is really just love. It’s all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go.” Jamie Anderson

Mom and Dad: You are both my constant cheerleaders. You never failed to let me know I can do anything I set my mind to. That I am capable of anything. Thank you for always loving me, for always being there for me, and for always believing in me when I could not.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Tell me, I forget... show me, I remember... Involve me, I understand."¹

As a music educator, I have spent countless hours researching, writing, and applying lesson plans that focus on various music methodologies. Although there are several, the Orff-Schulwerk approach has become the guiding music methodology and integral format of my classroom instruction.

The philosophy of the Orff approach centers each musical experience on the whole student. It engages the body through movement and dance; the mind through imaginative play and composition; the eyes with exciting props and musical instruments; and the mouth with rhythmic chant, speech, and song. It is an experiential approach to music that centers on creativity through the student's natural responses to music. By utilizing collaboration, imaginative music-making, and performance, the approach builds upon the basic elements of music through personal and social engagement in collaboration, communication, trust, and respect. The voice, musical instruments, and body movements are the three key ingredients that form the Orff-Schulwerk approach. Created between the years of 1924 and 1936, Carl Orff crafted the curriculum not as an end, but as a process. The teacher is positioned as the tool for the creating experience, while the students explore, create, and perform (Calvin-Campbell, 1998).

Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which individuals gain and grow

¹ Although Carl Orff is often credited with this statement, its origin is considered a Chinese proverb. Rowland, S-A (2011). *Bioenergy, is it really good for the planet?* <https://pages.nyu.edu/keefer/EvergreenEnergy/rowlandsa.pdf>
Steinberg, M. (2002). "Involve Me and I Will Understand": Academic Quality in Experiential Programs Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8(1), 207-229. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v8i1.100>
Paulos, E. et. al., *Handbook of Research on Urban Informatics: The Practice and Promise of the Real-Time City*, 2009. 10.4018/978-1-60566-152-0.ch028
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in their knowledge and skills for both understandings and managing their emotions while setting and achieving positive goals (CASEL, 2020). SEL focuses on five specific components of personal development. These include Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills, and Responsible decision making (Art in Action, 2021). Within the last few years, social emotional learning has become a popular addition to the music education classroom. Newly published books and articles are appearing in music education bookshelves and journals. Upon initial discovery, music education with SEL-embedded components could easily be viewed as the latest trendy style of teaching or fun fad for music educators that enter the educational arena as quickly as they fade, but during the summer of 2020, I took part in a book club that centered around the topic of SEL embedded into music education. I discovered a philosophy and way of teaching music that is both beneficial and necessary for our current students and educational system (Edgar, 2021; Varner, 2021). Although current research for music education with SEL-embedded components is not Orff approach specific, I believe that the teaching methods of both Orff and SEL hone in on very similar philosophies and techniques. Both SEL and the Orff approach authentically focus on the emotional and relational needs of children through creativity, collaboration, and the process of creating rather than completing.

Purpose of the Study

As an integral part of the educational course load in schools across the country, music education has long held an important place in the American school curriculum. Because of its similarities in implementation to music education (Laird, 2015; Salmon, 2012), the five components of social and emotional learning (Dymnicki, 2013) have recently become a topic of discussion among music educators. Books, curriculum, podcasts, and workshops have begun researching and publishing insights and ideas for integrating SEL strategies into the music classroom.

According to the CASEL research website (CASEL, 2020), SEL is an integral part of education

and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

When this is integrated into the classroom, children are taught methods to help them thrive and blossom as healthy, productive, and goal-focused humans. Numerous studies on SEL have been conducted and are currently being utilized in both regular and music education classrooms.

Despite SEL's popularity, specifically within general music education, research has yet to be conducted on the effects of SEL as an embedded piece of the Orff approach in music education. According to the American Orff Schulwerk Association website (AOSA, 2020a), within the Orff classroom, children begin with what they do instinctively: play. Imitation, experimentation, and personal expression occur naturally as students become confident, life-long musicians and creative problem solvers. The Orff approach to teaching is a model for optimal learning in 21st-century classrooms (Salmon, 2012). It is a highly recommended approach with regularly conducted workshops, published curricula, yearly level training programs, and a community of music education supporters across the world (AOSA, 2020b).

Despite their closely connected philosophies and approaches to learning, there is currently no research available that demonstrates the effects of a specifically Orff and SEL embedded implementation within the music education classroom. Based on the uniquely similar definitions of SEL and Orff, there is a current need for study in the field of intertwining the two methods and the testing of its effects on students (Edgar, 2017; CASEL, 2020).

The purpose of this study seeks to demonstrate there is a clear connection of development in students who receive an SEL-embedded Orff approach versus students that receive an

Orff-only approach in music education.

Significance of the Study

Currently, there are no research findings that demonstrate that embedding SEL into the Orff music approach creates opportunities for more mindfully musical and SEL-aware students than those students who are given an Orff-only based music education. Music educators and researchers such as Edgar are speaking out on the importance of further research and implementation of SEL within music curricula such as the Orff approach (2020, presentation at virtual Orff Symposium). Researchers Eren et al. have conducted studies on the separate effects of Orff and SEL when instructing autistic children in an educational setting (2013). The research canvas is now open and ready for studies that focus specifically on the results of embedding SEL components into the music education classroom.

Because the philosophy and technique of the Orff approach mirror the philosophy and goals of the five SEL components in a truly unique manner, and there is a current gap in research on this topic, I believe there is a distinct need for further investigation on the outcomes of an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education and the research findings should matter greatly to music educators, classroom teachers, principals, professors, Orff level instructors, and curriculum writers, as they will greatly impact future learning strategies, curriculum development, and teacher implementation. Research findings will be the first step in learning that an SEL-embedded Orff approach promotes more social and emotionally aware and musically skilled students, which will then further promote positive outcomes in a student's life development. The integration of an SEL-embedded Orff approach will create a new and innovative style of teaching that seamlessly transitions both elements of the Orff approach in music education and SEL components into one succession of positive student development.

The Research Questions

The problem statement for this topic: Is an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education more effective than merely an Orff-only based teaching method? Defined as “producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect” (Merriam-Webster, 2021), the researcher will determine if

the outcomes from the experimental group classroom show that an SEL-embedded Orff approach can effectively demonstrate different outcomes from an Orff-only control group classroom. The use of the word embedded seat music at the focal point of the study as the SEL components work in line with the music-making process.

This problem statement prompted the research study journey and was broken down into three specific categories that describe what three elements will be specifically analyzed in the study.

RQ 1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

A. Is there a difference between field notes in mindfully musical behavior and language observations?

B. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in mindfully musical language?

RQ 2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

A. Is there a difference between student survey results in SEL-aware student data results?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in SEL-aware language?

C. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in SEL-aware language?

D. Is there a difference between artifacts in SEL-aware student creations?

E. Is there a difference between field notes in SEL-aware behavior and language?

RQ 3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental group?

A. Is there a difference between student rubric results in musically aware student performances?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in musically aware language?

C. Is there a difference between field notes in musically aware behavior and language observations?

As a seasoned music educator that focuses on the Orff process within my lesson planning and implementation, I have come to strongly believe that the SEL components organically coincide with the Orff philosophy of music education. The process focuses on collaboration, teamwork, decision making, positive achievement, and personal involvement in the music making process. As I attended Orff workshops, conferences, and classes, I have seen intricate connections between the musicality of the Orff approach and the SEL characteristics that naturally flow from the philosophy of the process. As mentioned above, SEL has become a popular and important piece of music education through podcasts, published materials, organizations, and public speakers. I believe the next essential step in this outflow of knowledge is the specific research of the Orff approach as it applies to the five SEL components. I believe that this study will not only open the door to further SEL and music research but also begin the process of new curriculum development and teaching methods. It will benefit future music educators, college professors, Orff instructors, curriculum developers, and school administrators.

My mixed methods research will take place as a purposeful convenience sample at a southern Wisconsin private school in which I hold current employment. The population sample will include two fourth-grade classrooms. The experimental class will be instructed with an SEL-embedded Orff approach, while the control group class will be provided with an Orff-only music curriculum. Quantitative data will be collected from both the control and experimental classes through student surveys and weekly performance rubrics. Qualitative data collection will include focus group discussions with randomly selected students from both the control and experimental classes. These discussions will take place twice for each class. As the researcher, I

will also be compiling a researcher teacher field notes journal of documented data that demonstrates evidence of growth based on the three research questions. Serving as further qualitative data, students from both classes will organically create artifacts that will demonstrate evidence of growth based on the research questions. A weekly performance rubric rating of 1 through 5 will be assessed by the teacher/researcher. This rubric will provide data on the musicality level of each class session. Lastly, qualitative data will be collected from two randomly selected parent focus groups from both the control and experimental classrooms. This data will serve as further evidence of growth from students for all three research questions. Combined, these data collection tools will work together to create robust and valid research results to back up my hypothesis. I believe that the final results will demonstrate that an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education does indeed develop more musically-minded, SEL-aware, and musically skilled students than students that are given an Orff-only approach to music education.

Research Design

The researcher holds to a pragmatist paradigm worldview which refers to research that occurs within a social context and focuses on the very best understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic paradigm targets research with the belief that the world is viewed through personal human experience. Knowledge is obtained through these experiences and people's knowledge and understanding (Kaushik et al., 2019). This view focuses on seeking out several approaches in data collection while honing in on the what and how questions of research outcomes.

In determining the research approach through the lens of a convergent process and pragmatic paradigm, the interaction needs were compared between the quantitative and

qualitative strands. It was determined that both the quantitative and qualitative approaches carry unique and valid options for this research. This mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research designs with a greater breadth and depth of data analysis. This approach also allows for diverse data collection options that implement the instruments of both the qualitative and quantitative designs. The analysis of a mixed methods design creates opportunities to analyze and process data in several different ways, including external statistical, internal statistical, analytical, case-to-case, and naturalistic (Comb, 2013). These opportunities for flexibility further the strength of the research process validity and data findings. The strengths of a mixed method design include the collecting and analyzing of both quantitative and qualitative data, the rigorous collecting and analyzing of data, the integration of the data during the collection and analysis, and the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools either at the same time or separately (Wisdom, 2013). This design best fits the researcher's topic as it includes both qualitative (experiences of the students, parents, and researcher while learning through the curriculum) and quantitative (generalized statistical evidence to verify there was truly a transfer of knowledge and change in behavior) elements to demonstrate the findings of the research study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As a music education methodology, Orff and the five domains of social emotional learning can combine together as an embedded curriculum, providing the best of both worlds in educational philosophy and methodology. Carl Orff believed that music begins from within. This focus on the inward growth of student-centered learning is deeply ingrained in the philosophy of social and emotional learning. It is the inner motivation, reflection, and self-awareness to strengthen and grow our potential as empathetic and responsible human beings (Salmon, 2012).

Research suggests that music educators can strategically and effectively guide students in active music making and social problem solving while engaging in a shared experience of musical and emotional growth. Music making in its basic format produces a unifying harmony of emotional connections between individuals (Laird, 2015). The skill of making music in a community of musicians requires adequate social development, and through the music making process; individuals partake in an act of self-expression, group collaboration, and emotional stimulation (Kupana, 2015).

The scholarly writings in this literature review will examine the documented and data-driven findings behind the importance of integrating music and SEL, along with specific assessments that interweave both methods. It will then venture into new terrain as the topic of the Orff process and SEL are explored. Because this concept is new and currently unresearched, there is very little evidence available on the effects of such an embedded methodology. I believe that research on this topic is vital to the field of music education. It will impact the work of music educators, collegiate-level professionals, curriculum developers, and conference presenters. I believe that the findings will demonstrate that the Orff approach and SEL intimately and uniquely complement each other to become the strongest and most effective methodology

for the music education classroom. Most importantly, this research can provide future interdisciplinary collaboration with classroom teachers, while simultaneously moving music education into the circle of core curriculum subjects. Lastly, the research findings can create opportunities for collaboration with a common language, cross-curricular development, assessment strategies, and create future long-term studies.

Definitions of Terms

The Orff Approach

The Orff-Schulwerk approach is considered a progression of musical experiences in which students guide their learning through creative collaboration in a stress-free environment where fear of failing is extinguished. The process utilizes a specific scaffolding technique that moves from observation to imitation to experimentation, improvisation, literacy, and performance (Long, 2013; Salmon, 2012).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social emotional learning has been defined through theory, framework, and practice within the areas of organizational psychology, education, and the social sciences. According to Domitrovich et al. (2015), social emotional learning is defined as the “framework to promote social, emotional and academic competence” in youth and “coordinate school-family-community partnerships" (p. 6). This definition has been further extended through the research efforts of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Organization (CASEL, 2020). The central tenant of SEL is to emphasize learning and growth that supports academic achievement (Jones & Doolittle, 2017), which is embedded within CASEL’s five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible

decision-making. Within music education, Edgar (2021) further delineates these five domains into the three focuses of Identity, Belonging, and Identity.

SEL-Aware

This definition refers to a student's ability and awareness to develop (the process that creates growth) in their own personal social-emotional ability and capacities.

CASEL's five competencies are further developed with accompanying goals, integration strategies, assessment policies within classrooms, and teaching practices and outcomes. Many school systems are looking to increase school support from families and community partnerships through planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement strategies (Domitrovich, 2015) in order to develop positive classrooms within schools to improve students' well-being and learning (Melnick et al., 2017).

Musicality

The definition of musicality has become a very loose term and claims several definition variations based on its context and audience. Henkjan et al. define (2015) musicality as a natural and spontaneous set of traits that are based on and constrained by our biological and cognitive system. In professional music settings, musicality has a very distinct focus on the technical achievement of a musician. This is considered an absolute view that is structured around performance, composition, and improvisation as a means for achievement.

Musical philosopher Bennett Reimer focuses instead on the word musical intelligence to define musicality as accumulation of both talent and skill. Music methodologies, including the Orff approach, hold to a more relativistic definition of musicality than Reimer, which suggests

that all humans are capable of being musical (Jaffurs, 2004). The relativistic or total participation (Lawton, 2020) definition of musicality focuses not on technical expertise but on student success and participation. It hones in on the elimination of technical roadblocks so that students feel an immediate sense of accomplishment by “doing” music. The goal is for music to naturally flow from the student-led activities instead of the constraints of rules and conventions (Long, 2013).

The Orff-Schulwerk Association website states that releasing creativity that extends far beyond the music classroom, Orff and Keetman conceived an approach to building musicianship in every learner through the integration of music, movement, speech, and drama (AOSA, 2020 c). Musicality is an innate part of every human that is strengthened within a nurturing environment (Jaffurs, 2004). The goal is not virtuosity of musicianship, but instead the ability to create an expressive flow of music sound through a large group participatory action. Of course, the more skilled musicians are appreciated, and their strong abilities are used to hold the group together as a glue to keep the performance moving along (Lawton, 2020). Thus, musicians of all skill levels work together to create an expressive and social musical performance. This dissertation will refer to musicality in the relativistic view adhered to by Orff in his philosophy of music education.

Musically Aware

The term musically aware refers to the technical development in student musicality. This is where the typical music classroom standards assessment takes place. It is the measuring of student musical development (the process that creates growth). The term focuses solely on a

student's understanding of musical skills (rhythm, pitch, ensemble coordination, note reading, etc).

Mindfully Musical

When the five components of SEL and collaborative music making work together within a space of empathy, respect, and positivity; students begin to uphold their understanding of music making and involve both their cognitive and emotional processes in uniformity with each other. This is the point when music making becomes a part of them personally. It is no longer simply an external source of creation, but an artistic extension of their being. This is what will be labeled mindfully musical. This process is achieved when both SEL and the Orff approach of music making are embedded together into a strategic teaching process. To be mindful in music making, students begin to piece together their own philosophy of music making. Students begin to think about their music making experience and become aware of new perspectives and ways of understanding the music making process (Stauffer, 2005). When students create music in the participatory style of learning, teachers observe

. . . flowing expressiveness children manifest when they move does not always translate to playing instruments or singing, particularly when it involves more focused aspects of musical understanding, such as reading. When students are moving, students understand musical ideas instinctively in a way that formal, symbol-based musical ideas cannot convey. (Lawton, 2020, p. 21)

Custodero describes this feeling as immersing oneself so deeply in the musical experience that we forget about ourselves and what we are physically doing and become unified with our music making (2002).

SEL in Education

SEL can be broken down into five specific components that begin with self-awareness, an understanding of oneself's self-regulating abilities. This component focuses on a positive mindset, self-efficacy, and optimism. The domain of self-management is the ability to manage stress, control emotions, and delay gratification in an effort to achieve personal goals. This is an important asset in reaching educational goals. The component of social awareness is vital for classroom collaboration. It is the ability to show understanding and respect for people of varying backgrounds and cultures. The fourth component of SEL is the need for relationship skills. It requires communication, empathy, and cooperation. Lastly, responsible decision making, demonstrates knowledge, skill, wisdom, and understanding of ethics and social norms. It is intricately woven into the threads of classroom community and collaboration. Each of these components hones in on the development of higher understanding and positive engagement with the people and environments around them (Denham, 2016).

This literature review will examine both the five SEL components and its application in classroom practice. The major strengths of currently available literature lay within the topics of SEL found in books, articles, school district writings, and scholarly data collection of the effects and importance of SEL within the school system. These numerous resources point to the importance of SEL's positive development in student learning. These writings also stress the evidence that students involved in the SEL curriculum are considered more resilient and centered human beings (Domitrovich et al., 2015).

The SEL process and five components originated in 1994, when a group of educators, researchers, and child advocates gathered to create strategies for childhood mental health and behavioral issues. Later known as the Fetzner group, this collaborative project coined the term "social and emotional learning" as a broad framework for implementing a program focus for

child well-being within family, school, and community. This formation of CASEL carried SEL educational application to the next level through the establishment of evidence-based programs in pre-k through collegiate level courses (Domitrovich et al., 2015).

Short Term benefits of SEL in the Classroom

Teachers and educators promote social and emotional learning programs, curricula, and practices in schools and classrooms (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). More importantly, their own social and emotional well-being can be influential to students in the classroom based on their own modeling behaviors (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Specific classroom approaches have demonstrated improvement in student competence when combined with teaching strategies. These procedures center on cooperative learning and collaboration through projects and group work. Research has shown that when SEL strategies are integrated into all curriculum subjects (math, science, social studies, language arts, performing arts, etc), students demonstrate a higher level of social and emotional competence (CASEL, 2020) in their relationships with peers and an increased trust in teachers (Melnick et al., 2017). A recent meta-analysis of 213 studies demonstrates that students involved in evidence-based SEL programs showed improved curricular gains, 11% gains in test scores, higher-level problem-solving skills, planning skills, and level reasoning skills (Durlak et al., 2011). In addition to academic achievement, research shows that gains are also being made in the area of social skills. This includes an increase in positive, social behavior amongst peers (Melnick et al., 2017), as well as relationship building, motivation, and coping strategies (Stocker & Gallagher, 2019).

Long Term Benefits of SEL in the Classroom

In their recent study, Kuo et al. (2019), have shown that SEL factors can often predict future academic achievement. This Matthew Effect theory demonstrates that the variability of

achievement and ability increases over time. The conclusion of the study found that overall, student achievement in middle school played a large role in high scoring SEL factors (motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation) during high school. School-led SEL programs consistently produce student graduates with stronger identification in personal and social self-worth. There is also a strong connection to school achievement through improved test scores, grades, and attendance (CASEL, 2020). According to a 2015 Forbes report by Adams (2014), the top ten skills sought out by employers include the ability to work as a positive teammate, the ability to solve problems, the ability to make decisions, and the ability to communicate verbally with people both inside and outside an organization. Each of these qualifications is attached to one of the five SEL components (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making). Lastly, Oliver (2018) points out a meta-analysis study in which the positive effects of SEL programming identified several key features in students for long-term success. An example of this includes a study of kindergarten students that exhibit strong social-emotional skills are more likely to graduate from both high school and college. Furthermore, they were more likely to achieve full-time employment status and less likely to commit crimes, rely on public assistance, or have mental health issues.

The Orff Approach

Based on a progression of musical experiences in which students guide their learning through creative collaboration, the Orff-Schulwerk approach was created between the years of 1924 and 1936 by German composers Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. It was Orff's philosophy of composition (Goodkin, 2001) that led to the creation of his music methodology. Based on his belief in the ancient Greek ideal of "Mousike" - the meeting point of music, dance, and speech -

he crafted the philosophy of music education (Goodkin, 2001). The approach is designed not as an end goal, but as a process. The teacher is viewed as the journey guide as the students explore, create, and perform through speech, movement, and dance (Calvin-Campbell, 1998). Originally developed for adults, Orff began his research with college students and elemental music. This basic form of music composition provided a clear canvas for easy integration of rhythmic activities in speech, movement, and instrumentation (Philips, 2000). Despite its humble beginnings, the Orff approach now boasts thousands of members worldwide and over 3,000 members in the United States (AOSA, 2020a) alone.

Philosophy of the Orff Approach

The philosophy of Orff-Schulwerk centers on the whole student. It is an experiential approach to music that encourages creativity through a student's natural responses to music. Through collaboration, imaginative composition, and performance, the method builds upon the basic elements of music theory with a focus on personal and social engagement. The key elements in the process include collaboration, communication, trust, respect, and confidence. With a foundation in music and dance, Orff structured his approach with the three ingredients of the voice (speech, chant, and singing), movement (dance and body percussion), and instruments.

The Orff-Schulwerk pedagogy is founded on three philosophical tools. The first, interdisciplinary creativity combines the art forms of speech, movement, and instrumentation (mentioned above). These foundational elements blossom into endless possibilities for educational music activities.

The second philosophical tool is the use of elemental music as the basis of learning. This ideally enables the integration of speech, improvisation, movement, and composition into music activities and play. The pedagogy focuses not on established high art music but on the simple

structures of music to encourage composition and improvisation during active music making experiences (Johnson, 2017). Because music is considered a natural human instinct, Orff believed that children need to feel the beat, rhythm, meter, and tempo. Thus clapping, chanting, stomping, and snapping are considered fundamental to the educational process (Johnson, 2017; Long, 2013).

Community and collaboration play a fundamental role in the Orff approach. The third pedagogical tool focuses on the social and personal skills students utilize while composing, moving, and speaking in rhythm. This process unilaterally builds confidence while imparting musical knowledge (Johnson, 2017).

Classroom Practice of the Orff Approach

The Orff approach relies on an environment that fosters risk-taking and vulnerability while encouraging an open-ended and collaborative place of learning (Philips, 2000). Orff once said, “It is the imagination that should be awakened and trained” (Goodkin, 2001, p. 20). The approach focuses on humanity as imaginative creatures that only need to be awakened. From this point improvisation, composition, and performance are the three avenues for turning the imagination into music (Goodkin, 2001; Long, 2013). As mentioned earlier, the process focuses on four specific areas of creative learning: Exploration, Imitation, Improvisation, and Creation (Calvin-Campbell, 1998). Exploration, the beginning of the creative process, utilizes objects, speech, movement, and instruments to explore a specific concept or musical idea. This seamlessly flows into imitation. Here, students echo what they hear in voice, movement, or instrumentation. Improvisation steps out of imitation. It is an application of imitation that allows students to demonstrate musical leadership and creativity. As facilitators, teachers guide students into recognizing the building blocks of these objects, ideas, songs, and rhythms. Students embark

on this musical journey when they are able to step by step move through this musical process in collaboration with their classmates. The finality of the process is the musical performance. It is the crux of the process and the accumulation of all prior lesson activities. Students collaboratively rely on each other to mold together all previous scaffolding steps into a performance fitted with the three layers of the Orff foundational elements: speech, movement, and instrumentation. An example of this journey begins with a story of a flower, which moves to a rhythmic chant about gardening. This then turns into a simple modal tune sung about a rainstorm, which evolves into a movement dance to the sounds of rain, which finally forms into a harmonic rondo form composition, complete with instrumentation and improvisational sections. Based on its flow of events, Johnson (2017) states that it is not a methodology, but a process in which students lead in the flow of the activities while the teacher guides with flexible instruction (Johnson, 2017).

Benefits of the Orff Approach

Because the Orff approach focuses on reaching the whole child, the benefits are plentiful. Students experience immediate successes as they unlock their own creativity within the creation process (Calvin-Campbell, 1998; Long, 2013). Feelings of success and achievement boost self-worth, which leads to a stronger sense of goal achievement. Because of this, the Orff approach is often viewed as a psychological method since it is built upon the emotional and mental needs of humanity and not on a specific curriculum or methodology. It is a music education that provides avenues for emotional development that will guide students for the rest of their lives. The group work associated with the collaborative structure of Orff discourages isolation and instead promotes a feeling of support and togetherness as students interact with each other (Salmon, 2012). As an organic process that flows from student involvement and

creativity, musical competencies are scaffolded based on the needs of the students and not according to a set curriculum rubric. Each individual child leads their learning process and their musicality is developed within their own timeframe (Johnson, 2017; Kim & Kemple, 2011).

With a foundational philosophy of reaching the whole child through movement, speech, and instrument-based learning style, Orff teachers allow students to create and perform while acting as facilitators within the lesson and learning process. Orff music teachers are experts in their craft as they create opportunities for musical, emotional, and cognitive development while relying on speech, body percussion, and improvisation to guide their teaching.

SEL and Music Education

In recent years social and emotional learning has become a popular addition to the music education classroom. The Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning defines SEL as a “framework to promote social, emotional, and academic competence” in youth and “coordinate school-family-community” partnerships (Domitrovich et al., 2015). One of the earliest scholarly promoters of music education and SEL, Edgar (2017) defends the use of SEL in the music classroom. Among his reasons, he focuses on the emotional impact that music has on humanity. Both consistent and predictable, music births emotion and creates a reaction that moves into connection. Music is a powerful conduit that creates space for connection between emotions, humanity, and self (Edgar, 2017). Students feel free to create, collaborate, and express their thoughts. It is a place in which music making allows for social interaction, development, and shared meaning within the context of the music classroom (Kim & Kemple, 2011).

Philosophy of SEL and Music Education

Edgar (2017) believes that the physiological, social, and emotional benefits of music can be profound. Research has shown time and again that music education plays a foundational role

in the positive development of children. Music education provides opportunities for growth through listening, feeling, and moving. Brain development and cognitive processing also improve, along with a long-lasting impact on emotional regulation, academic abilities, math skills, and literacy skills (Kim, 2017; Ritblatt et al., 2013). The music education classroom naturally promotes SEL competencies. Music educators are strategic and innovative conduits for producing music curricula and lessons rooted in SEL skills (Varner, 2020). An investigation on the self-efficacy of students and goal completion (Mullensiefen et al., 2015) found that music education skills and activities are directly connected to the intelligence and academic success of students. Musical activities promote creative thinking through improvisation and compositional activities. Creating and performing engages collaboration between students.

Music supports SEL as a sensorial stimulator where emotions are discussed and vocabulary is expanded. Music supports SEL as an aesthetic experience through experiences and interactions where discussions and performances involving imagination, perception, and exploration are involved. Music supports SEL in relaxing and leveling tense emotions (Laird, 2020).

Music spaces hold a particular connection to belonging and community. They are pathways for students to communicate how they feel in a safe and non-vulnerable manner. It uses the language of emotional expression as it communicates feelings (Kim & Kemple, 2011; Kupana, 2015). The intimate trust and teamwork necessary in music making experiences create an almost immediate opportunity for belonging and acceptance. When students feel valued they become committed to their collaborative group and the quality of musicianship is enhanced (Laird, 2020). The practice of music making is dependent on this sense of shared experience and connection.

The implementation of SEL in music education creates a strong recipe for a fast track to success for both self and group expression through collaborative music making (Kupana, 2015). These group connection opportunities create uniquely vulnerable moments for building student empathy. Directly related to emotional understanding, empathy creates strong opportunities for success in personal and social awareness, relationship-building skills, and positive decision making. Active student group music making that includes imitation, collaborative composition, performance, and improvisation fosters empathetic development and positive attitudes towards each other (Kim, 2017; Laird, 2020). Hallam states the importance of music within collaborative social connections to promote ethical thinking skills while respecting the varying belief and abilities of fellow students (2010).

“Music begins inside human beings, and so must any instruction” (Orff, 1963). Just as the music begins from the inside, the development of higher-level social and emotional skills begins from within the individual student. Classrooms that view students as biologically, socially, and psychologically whole individuals with an identity in social interaction promote emotional development within their students (Salmon, 2012).

Classroom Practice of SEL and Music Education

Edgar (2017) points out ten foundationally specific elements of music that benefit children. These are emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response, conformity to social norms, religious and social validations, stability of cultural expression, and contribution to society. These ten elements are deeply rooted in social and emotional philosophy.

The application of SEL and music is presented through a variety of methods. One recent option (Kim, 2017) is the integration of the 4 C’s: critical thinking, creative thinking,

collaboration, and communication. These four elements correspond with the five SEL components of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision making. The four C's can be broken down into musical opportunities. Critical thinking is used to evaluate and improve musical ideas. Creative thinking explores musical ideas and organizes them into themes. Communication skills demonstrate feedback with peers, along with expressive group performance. Lastly, collaboration means sharing ideas and making music together with voice, movement, and instrumentation, which allows for positive peer feedback opportunities (Baker & Harvey, 2014; Jacobi, 2012; Kim, 2017).

Varner presents various teaching strategies that improve SEL skills within a music lesson (2020). He recommends circle drumming ensembles that promote community learning, collaboration, group respect, careful listening, and communication skills. Varner recommends the use of folk music, which focuses on the history and stories of cultural groups. This promotes social awareness, community responsibility, multiculturalism, and focused group listening in music making (2020). Lastly, Varner (2020) points out the importance of setting and reaching musical goals through planned classroom performances and presentations. This process focuses on the SEL component of self-management through stress management, delayed gratification, and identifying emotions and emotional self-perception through the study of the musical text, musician, or cultural constructs involved in the performance repertoire.

Benefits of SEL and Music Education

Socialization is developed through the making of music. Collaborative work creates memberships of connection within performances of musical expression. Russian psychologist Vygotsky believed that social learning was developed in children through interpersonal interactions (Goldstein, 1999), thus, best practice learning occurs when students work together in

understanding concepts being taught (Edgar, 2017; Kim & Kemple, 2011). This idea aligns with the SEL component of social awareness. Music making is a group experience, enhancing the development of social awareness. It is also considered a prerequisite for successful musical growth (Kupana, 2015).

The inherent motivation to learn is naturally connected to music as it is part of the simultaneity of the internal cognitive process (Custodero, 2010). This desire to learn flows from the creative process of music making. This musical focus of engagement creates a deeper level of concentration and focus. The concept of time and space fades as the music-making process is the main focus and goal (Custodero, 2010). Without conscious awareness, students learn musical concepts such as rhythm, harmony, meter, and melodic movement without distraction. The music itself creates a higher level of student concentration while simultaneously providing elements of musical education. There are also emotional benefits that flow from music participation. According to Hallam (2010), these include an improvement of a student's value in self-worth and a positive increase in confidence and self-esteem. These benefits organically occur within a music classroom that promotes personal advocacy in communicating ideas and creativity. Tighter relationships are formed as students feel trust and respect from their peers during the music learning process (Baker & Harvey, 2014).

Current research is continuing to demonstrate that music also plays a key component in school readiness across various developmental domains (Baker & Harvey, 2014; Lin et al., 2003). One study demonstrates that SEL and music promote positive interactive experiences among students (Lin et al., 2003). The quantitative research shows that 3,000 kindergarten students exhibited strong social and self-regulation skills after completing the program. The specifically-affected social skills included cooperation, positive interactions with others, and

social independence. The study concluded that these findings were not a surprise as the program followed research recommendations and the curriculum songs focused on SEL growth components. The findings conclude that music-based programs do help students develop stronger social and emotional skills that benefit their future education (Lin et al., 2003).

Further research has found that positive relationships between teachers and students formulate communication and commitment to group responsibilities and goal setting (Jacobi, 2012). This caring classroom environment specifically speaks on the historical importance of music for every child. Jacobi (2012) also describes that few other subjects allow for such a strong connection with SEL as the music classroom when she states, “Social behavior constitutes music’s very core, allowing SEL skills to be taught through the curriculum rather than in addition to it” (p. 74). Music activities are a powerful learning tool, a form of both communication and expression. When children use music to express feelings through voice and instrument performance, they are expressing higher-level communication skills with their peers (Kim, 2017; Salmon, 2012; Vist, 2011). Even adults are able to conjure up both the lyrics and melody of simple childhood songs from decades past. The messages from these songs stick to the psyche. They guide people years after having grown too old to sing these childhood songs for pleasure.

The 2020 pandemic created an even greater need for mental health awareness and responsibility within an educational framework. Students have experienced many types of personal losses and these traumas will require healing, compassion, and an educational framework that provides both strong cognitive learning opportunities and a strong SEL-supported curriculum (Edgar & Morrison, 2020). For all the reasons listed above, music education is the perfect backdrop for this situation. It creates opportunities for strong growth as musicians, as well as healthy, happy, and connected humans.

Edgar has broken down the five SEL components into three specific categories (2017; 2021). These categories include Identity (a focus on self), Belonging (a focus on others), and Agency (a focus on decision making). The term *Identity* refers to the development of a student's sense of individuality. Although identity is primarily shaped through the influences of culture, family, and society, socialization within the music classroom plays a key role in influencing and guiding students in their musical identity (Edgar, 2017). The musical experiences within the classroom impact the emotions, thoughts, and feelings of students, which play a key role in the collaborative interactions of classmates (Edgar, 2021). The term *Belonging* reaches beyond the self-awareness of an individual student and focuses on the unique differences among classmates. Cultural diversity, race, gender identity, personality, and upbringing offer a beautiful and broad spectrum of student perspectives. Edgar states, "As they start to develop their own preference, children also begin to rely on social factors such as group membership in their development of the self and their view of self in relation to their view of others" (Edgar, 2017, p.36).

Inclusive-based classrooms promote and nurture a sense of belonging among students as they learn and grow from each other (Edgar, 2021). Lastly, the term *Agency* focuses on the decision-making process within a collaborative music making framework. Within the music classroom, students have the autonomy to make decisions, whether positive or negative. In a positive and inclusive music classroom environment, teachers guide students towards empathetic and collaborative communication within the music making process (Edgar & Morrison, 2020).

Transformative SEL

Just as our truths are defined by our experiences (Varner, 2021), so also the transformative powers of SEL have continued to develop and grow with the needs of students. Issues of inequality, bigotry, misogyny, and racism have created harmful bullying within

American school systems (Edgar, 2017). Varner (2021) believes that SEL creates a unique space within the music classroom in which teachers can begin to change the narrative of inequality and bullying behaviors. He states, “A general music classroom with an SEL focus can help teachers create just, inclusive, and healthy communities that support all people endeavoring to find success” (p. 2). Edgar’s three categories of Identity, Belonging, and Agency can be used by music educators to promote empathetic feelings and actions to counteract and reduce the effects of bullying behavior within schools (Edgar, 2017). Those targeted by bullying behaviors are often considered “different” by student social standards. Music educators hold a unique and important place for creating a positive, safe, and inclusive space for bullying victims (Edgar, 2017). Utilizing SEL, educators can focus on Edgar's three categories of Identity, Belonging, and Agency to guide music lessons, conversations, and classroom expectations.

Teachers should also utilize SEL to both scrutinize their own implicit bias, while also promoting inclusivity and exposure to culturally responsive lenses. Labeled as SEL 2.0 (Edgar et al., 2021), a transformative movement has been placed on SEL to advance equity among all students. Machacon states, “With transformative SEL, we can bring cultural integration, community building, promotion of ethnic/racial identity development, integration of equity content, and project-based experiential learning” (Edgar et al., 2021, p. 38). This begins with teacher self-reflection and the examination of implicit bias. The disparity within the American schools’ current system, practice, and narrative must be acknowledged (Edgar, 2021; Varner, 2021). Next, a transformative plan of educational practice must be implemented. This involves asking questions. Talk to students and learn their perspectives, lenses of identity, insecurities, fears, joys, and accomplishments (Edgar, 2021; Varner, 2021). Second, implement musicians and compositions that represent and honor students of every ethnic, racial, cultural, and sexual

orientation. This creates a sense of belonging and inclusivity among students (Edgar, 2021).

SEL and the Orff Approach

As stated earlier, social and emotional learning has been defined through theory, framework, and practice, within the areas of organizational psychology, education, and social sciences (Domitrovich et al., 2015). The Orff approach is considered a progression of musical experiences in which students develop their learning through creative collaboration in an inclusive environment where the fear of failing is extinguished. The process utilizes a specific scaffolding technique that moves from observation to imitation to experimentation, improvisation, literacy, and performance (Long, 2013). Although two completely different entities, the philosophy and structure of both SEL and Orff hold very unique resemblances.

Current Research

This literature review demonstrates that although there is much written and researched on SEL and music education, as of this writing, there is currently no material available that specifically embeds SEL into the Orff approach. As literature continues to be examined and organized, common threads that coexist between both SEL and the Orff approach continue to be uncovered. Key research discussed in this literature review has examined scholarly writings that have included both the Orff approach and SEL.

Cristiano et al. refer to the Orff approach as a “flow state.” This act of creating puts students in a place of intense focus and engagement and requires self-control and positive choices (2012). This philosophy strongly connects key elements within the SEL components, including self-awareness and responsible decision making.

Recent scholarly writings focus on collaboration in music as a conduit for building friendships, demonstrating empathetic behaviors, and valuing the beliefs and understandings of

other cultures (Kim, 2017; Ritblatt, 2013). These attributes follow the SEL components of social awareness and self-management. Goodkin (2001) describes this music making environment as the moments of joining together to unite as something greater. He stated that the Orff process uses the word ‘harmony’ to represent peace among students as well as the musical concept.

Eren et al., (2013) explain the more effective and permanent benefits of the Orff approach as a method of multiple intelligence learning. The article discusses the Orff philosophy of production and creation over technical success. This eliminates success anxiety and clears the path for natural learning in a positive and playful environment. They later discuss the social and emotional impact this has on children with autism. It demonstrates an increase in communication and imitation abilities while reducing negative behaviors (Eren et al., 2013).

Although not specifically united together, it is of value to highlight these writings as they are the closest available connections to SEL and Orff research. Because there is currently no direct research and scholarly writing on the effects of an SEL-embedded Orff approach, the literature highlighted in this review provides a vivid description of the natural connections between the Orff approach to music education and the five SEL components (CASEL, 2020). During a virtual symposium hosted by the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (November, 2020), Edgar was a keynote presenter. With a focus on Identity, Belonging, and Agency, his presentation honed in on three recently created Illinois SEL standards that align with music education. Illinois Standard Goal 1 focuses on Identity: developing self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success is accompanied by the following skill sets: identify and recognize emotions, accurate self-perception, self-monitoring, persistence, coping, responsibility, self-acceptance; recognize strengths and needs, self-efficacy, impulse control, stress management, self-motivation, discipline, goal setting, organizational skills, and

emotional de-escalation. He discussed using emojis as both an assessment tool and a means to engage students with their own lingo. While listening to or performing a piece of music, students choose an icon to best describe their feelings. Edgar (2020) strongly encourages reflection writing in listening activities (see Figure 1) and in self-assessment with every process and finished product (see Figure 2). Competency in goal setting and self-assessment is key for continued growth.

Figure 1

Emotional/Musical Chart

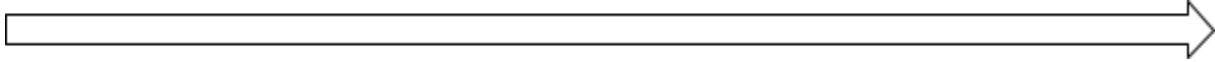
| Piece of Music Title Composer | Musical Elements | Perceived Emotion | How I Felt While Listening/Performing |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Rhythm Tonality Tempo Tension/Release | Utilize a great number of emojis to ensure a robust emotional vocabulary | |

Figure 2

Exit Slip

Personal Growth Goal

Beginning

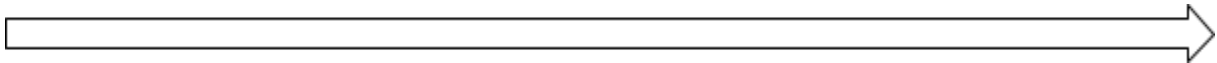


Reflection

Achieved

Personal Growth Goal

Beginning

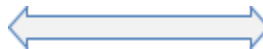


Reflection

Achieved

| Goal | Category | Level of Achievement | Examples of ??? |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|

????



Note: Edgar, S. N. (Presenter). (2020, November 14).

Music education and social emotional learning: Now more than ever. Speech presented at Orff Symposium, Virtual.

The Illinois Standard Goal 2 focuses on Belonging: Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. Also a strong component of the Orff philosophy, this goal focuses on participation, collaboration, and group success. Its key skill sets include recognizing diverse thoughts, feelings, and perspectives; cooperation; respectful communication; respectful conflict resolution; perspective-taking; empathy; diversity appreciation; respect for others; social engagement; relationship building; refusal negotiation; and conflict management. Other goals focus on the awareness of social norms and values; respect for human dignity; concern and compassion for others; motivation to solve interpersonal problems; multicultural awareness; the ability to create new friendships and relate to family. At the AOSA Symposium, Edgar (2020) spoke to Orff music educators on the importance of opening up the curriculum to celebrate the diversity of composers and musical genres. It is vital for students to see and hear music from people that look and sing like them.

Lastly, Illinois Standard Goal 3 hones in on Agency: Demonstrate decision making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community settings. Goal 3 skills set include promoting one's own health; avoiding risky behaviors; dealing honestly and fairly with others; contributing to the good of one's classroom, school, family, community, and environment; generating alternative solutions; anticipating the consequences; evaluating and learning from one's decision making, problem identification, situation analysis, problem-solving, evaluation and reflection; creating realistic and adaptive response strategies; and utilizing alternative solution thinking. Edgar (AOSA Symposium, 2020) recommends activities of leadership for students. Do they have strategies and ideas to solve a musical problem? The option of creating cliffhanger musical stories allows students to predict the endings, and create new compositions from previously written pieces such as Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Finally, Edgar (AOSA

Symposium, 2020) discussed student avocation and articulation abilities. Any and all opportunities that allow students to demonstrate leadership and responsible decision making opportunities build trust, collaboration, and confidence.

Connecting SEL and the Orff Approach

Although no writings were found that specifically mention SEL and Orff as a combined unit of education, this section of the literature review will demonstrate the unique similarities between the Orff-Schulwerk approach and SEL. Throughout the reading process, it became apparent that the Orff approach in music education is centered on SEL components. The Orff approach relies on teaching strategies that promote empathy, self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship skills, and positive decision making. Lesson plan structures focus on collaboration, cooperative play, problem-solving, reflection, improvisation, and performance that work together to create avenues for personal and social growth. The two complement each other and create positive effects for further learning.

In their study on children's bereavement groups and the Orff approach, Register and Hilliard (2008) observed that Orff-focused therapy lessons support personal expression, identification, and decision making. The authors stress their utilization of Orff-based structures of music because of its specific exploration of emotions, social interactions, reflective opportunities, and promotion of positive behaviors (Register & Hillard, 2008). These functions fall into the SEL components of self-awareness, social-awareness, and responsible decision making.

In her writing on the humanistic aspects of Orff-Schulwerk, Salmon (2012) examined the importance of student self-activity and motivation in the Orff approach. These are key elements in the self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision making components of SEL.

Salmon (2012) also examined the importance of communicative, complementary, coexistent, and cooperative learning settings and demonstrated the various ways that children interact with each other in a collaborative and communicative environment within an Orff-Schulwerk framework.

Jacobi (2012) offers music and SEL lesson goals that reflect an Orff framework. These include students listening to different types of music that represent various cultures with an open and accepting mindset and accompanied with a discussion and reflection as well as having students demonstrate their ability to rehearse or perform in a musical ensemble, which requires listening mutual respect, and support from classmates. Lastly, students can work together to compose or improvise on a piece of music (Jacobi, 2012; Philips, 2000). These key goals of collaboration and communication focus on four SEL components: self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision making.

Improvisation, one of the key elements within the Orff process, is also considered an important avenue for enhancing SEL skills through the combining of expression of emotion with a musical performance. Collaboration in instrument and vocal performance, while characteristics of Orff, also stimulate social awareness as students manage their impulse control and social-awareness of those with whom they are creating (Kupana, 2015). Collaboration, an important ingredient in both SEL and Orff strategies, helps children develop bonds with classmates, demonstrate empathy, bounce ideas, and inspire higher-level learning (Kim, 2017).

The focus on building community instead of merely music skills is an approach that highlights inclusivity and relationship building (Kim & Kemple, 2011; Lawton, 2020). The idea of inclusivity and relationship building is a key component to social and emotional development, and thus a natural flow from the Orff process. In fact, this focus on participatory music making is an invitation for community building and thus creates a sense of community within the

classroom. This is where students are viewed as citizens with a responsibility to build up their community members and the world as a whole (Custodero, 2010; Lawton, 2020). This teaching method works in direct correlation with the SEL component of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Researchers Bolduc et al. (2020) pieced together specific research findings that showed students with specific learning disorders demonstrated several positive results after specific increments of music education. Collaboratively, they found that because music training encourages students in their oral and written language skills, music training relies strongly on auditory perception and working memory (2020). When put together, their research findings reveal that music training helps students overcome reading deficits. Because the Orff process of music education focuses on the exploration of sound, movement, imitation, and improvisation; there is strong stimulation in cognitive functions that complement reading and phonological development (Bolduc et al., 2020; Custodero, 2011).

Based on Edgar's SEL categories of Identity, Belonging, and Agency (2021) and the research within this literature review, Figure 3 demonstrates how uniquely the three philosophical components of the Orff approach connect with Edgar's three SEL categories. Each category connects to an SEL philosophical component, but not in equal measure. Students involved in an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education can experience a sense of *Identity* through the Orff elemental music foundations of movement, chant, improvisation, composing, and performing. These educational processes develop and enrich a sense of personal pride, satisfaction, and achievement as they create music that is based on their feelings, opinions, and personality (Edgard & Morrison, 2020). Additionally, students can experience a sense of *Identity* as they engage in student-centered activities of creativity. A sense of ownership is felt as

students feel respected and valued. Finally, students can experience a sense of *Identity* as they learn to appreciate and engage in a music collaboration with other students (Edgar & Elias, 2021). Their voice is heard and acknowledged as they work together to create, compose, improvise, and perform (Edgar & Morrison, 2020).

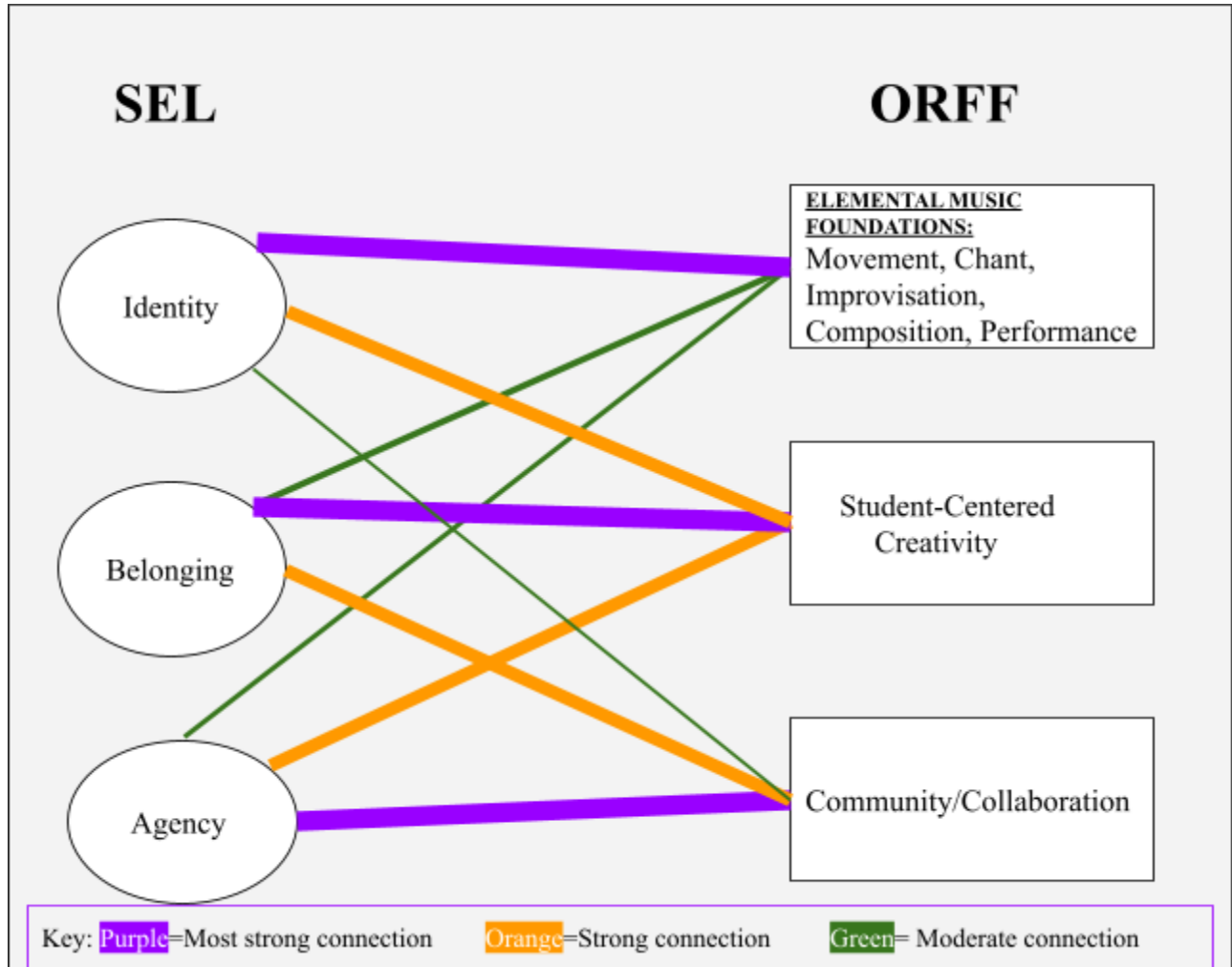
The category of *Identity* is most strongly connected to the Orff philosophy domain of *Elemental Music Foundations* in which student personalities and self identity shine through in the music making processes they engage in, while the domain of *Student-Centered Creativity* is strongly connected, and the *Community/Collaboration* domain is moderately strong.

Students involved in an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education can experience a moderate sense of *Belonging* through the *Orff Elemental Music Foundations*, but the SEL category of *Belonging* most strongly connects to the Orff philosophy domain of *Student-Centered Creativity*. Working as a collaborative team, students know they are both heard and valued within the music making process through the process of listening, sharing, and showing respect (Edgar, 2017). Students emotionally connect with each other and feelings of empathy, kindness, and encouragement are shared. Additionally, students can experience a strong sense of *Belonging* as they engage in *Community/Collaboration* of creativity through the sharing of ideas, feelings, and experiences of others during the music making process. Through understanding the perspectives, ideas, and backgrounds of others, students demonstrate the ability to understand and appreciate other classmates (Edgar, 2021).

Lastly, students can most strongly experience a sense of *Agency* as they engage in a music *Community/Collaboration* with other students as they engage in conversation and decision making opportunities within the music creating process.

Figure 3

Connecting the categories of SEL with the Orff approach and the three levels of connection each SEL category has to the Orff approach.



These decisions determine the intricate outcomes of the final music performance and provide an immediate sense of goal achievement and collective satisfaction (Edgar & Elias 2021). This is where students feel connected and united with their classmates as they engage in the music explorations. Students have opportunities to share experiences, make decisions, and reflect on their choices within the music making process (Edgar, 2021). These opportunities create a sense

of ownership and achievement. Student involved in an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education can experience a strong sense of *Agency* through the *Orff Elemental Music Foundations* (Edgar & Morrison, 2020). Further, students can experience a moderate sense of *Agency* as they engage in *Student-Centered Creativity*. Students not only guide the creating process, but collaboratively make decisions based on the needs, ideas, and inspirations of their classmates (Edgar, 2017).

Conclusion

As this literature has demonstrated, the similarities between both the philosophy and practice of the Orff approach uniquely complement and unify with the five SEL components (CASEL, 2020). Stepping beyond the current SEL and music education curriculum to the implementation of an Orff and SEL-embedded music approach is the next step in both the communities of music education and SEL.

Current contributions to the field of SEL and music education layout the framework for new studies to venture into the research of an SEL-embedded Orff approach. The work of Edgar (2013, 2017, 2020; Edgar & Morrison, 2020) paved the way for this unblazed trail. The current literature on SEL and music education are foundational and instrumental for student growth and achievement, especially with our world's current challenges.

It is time for a new path of research to begin in which further exploration of the effects of an SEL-embedded Orff approach can work together to grow stronger student musicians (Lawton, 2020) that demonstrate mindfully musical attributes (Custodero, 2010; Lawton, 2020; Stauffer, 2005), while exemplifying SEL awareness (CASEL, 2020). The direction of current research and dearth of evidence of the two approaches in combination demonstrates a great need for an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education. The awareness of this gap will impact

teachers, principals, curriculum writers, professional development opportunities, conference speakers, and music education professors. The value of this research will trickle down and around, affecting students, teachers, and future music educators.

This literature review strongly demonstrates a vital need for research regarding the effects of an SEL-embedded Off approach to music education. The researcher will be conducting a mixed methods design that will follow a convergent process in which both the quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed during the same time period. Both results will be joined together for comparison and finally interpreted for the final results (Creswell, 2014). The convergent design was chosen to create a strong picture of both a quantitative generalization of statistical data so that research can be replicated, while also presenting the lived experiences of students, parents, and researchers.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Music and the practices of social emotional learning have recently become an innovative component within the music education classroom. Despite podcasts, scholarly writings, and books on the topic, there is no current research on the effects of a social emotional learning-embedded Orff approach to music education. Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which individuals gain and grow in their knowledge and skills for understanding and managing their emotions while setting and achieving positive goals (CASEL, 2020).

Rationale for Selected Research Design: A Mixed Methods Design

The chosen research design was a mixed methods approach with a convergent process, in which both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed during the same time period. All results were united together and analyzed for comparative results (Creswell, 2014). This merging of data provided a strong picture for both the qualitative and quantitative research design, and thus supplied varying insights into the data collection findings (Creswell, 2015). It created a platform for the analysis of both the experiential data of qualitative research coupled with the statistical measurements of a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2015; Creswell et al., 2018). The researcher chose the mixed methods convergent process because it specifically merges both qualitative and quantitative data, creating a robust and thorough picture of the research results. The researcher believes this design demonstrated a stronger argument for the data findings, paving the way for further studies on this topic. She believes the findings create a space for interdisciplinary collaboration between grade level and music education teachers and thus continue to elevate music education as a core curriculum subject. The research findings will further provide opportunities for collaboration in common language, assessment strategies, and

future long-term studies. The data collection was gathered simultaneously and the results were merged together to provide thorough results from every angle of the research process.

The researcher holds to a pragmatist paradigm worldview, which refers to research that occurs within a social context and focuses on the very best understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic paradigm targets research with the belief that the world is viewed through personal human experience. Knowledge is obtained through these experiences, and each person's knowledge and understanding are based on their own personal experiences (Kaushik et al., 2019). This view focuses on seeking out several approaches in data collection while honing in on the what and how of research outcomes.

In determining the research approach through the lens of a convergent process and pragmatic paradigm, the interaction needs were compared between the qualitative and quantitative strands. It was determined that both the qualitative and quantitative approaches carry unique avenues for this research. This mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both research designs with a greater breadth and depth of research analysis. This approach also allows for diverse data collection options that implement the instruments of the qualitative and quantitative designs. The analysis of a mixed methods design creates opportunities to analyze and process data in several different ways, including external statistical, internal statistical, analytical, case-to-case, and naturalistic (Comb, 2013; Wisdom, 2013). These opportunities for flexibility further the strength of the research process's validity and data findings. This design best fits the researcher's topic as it includes qualitative pieces (experiences of the students as they develop through the curriculum) and quantitative (statistical evidence that verifies there is truly a transfer of knowledge and change in behavior) to demonstrate that the SEL-embedded Orff approach produces more musically mindful, SEL aware, and musically aware students. The

results will be measured through the data collection tools as they assess both the control group classroom (Orff-only approach) and the experimental group classroom (SEL-embedded Orff approach).

Because this topic of research is considered new and uncharted, it is vital that the research creates a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the results. These findings will aid in future research for curriculum developers, teachers, professors, and principals. |

Restatement of the Purpose and Research Questions

As an integral part of the educational course load in schools across the country, music education has long held an important place in the American school curriculum. Because of its similarities in implementation to music education (Laird, 2015; Salmon, 2012), the five components of SEL (Dymnicki, 2013) have recently become a topic of discussion among music educators. Books, curriculum, podcasts, and workshops have begun researching and publishing insights and ideas for integrating SEL specifically into the music classroom.

According to the CASEL research website (CASEL, 2020), SEL is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, demonstrate empathy, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (SEL, 2020). When this is integrated into the classroom, children are taught methods to help them thrive and blossom as healthy, productive and goal-focused humans. Numerous studies on SEL have been conducted and are currently being utilized in both grade level and music education classrooms.

Despite SEL's popularity within the general music education curriculum, research has yet to be conducted on the effects of SEL as an integrated part of the Orff approach to music

education. According to the American Orff-Schulwerk Association website (2020a), within the Orff classroom, children begin with what they do instinctively: play. Imitation, experimentation, and personal expression occur naturally as students become confident, life-long musicians and creative problem solvers (AOSA, 2020a). The Orff approach to teaching is a model for optimal learning in 21st-century classrooms (Salmon, 2012). It is a highly recommended approach with regularly conducted workshops, a published curricula, yearly level training programs, and a community of music education supporters across the world (AOSA, 2020b).

Despite their closely connected philosophies and approaches to learning, there is currently no research available that demonstrates the effects of an SEL-embedded Orff approach within music education. Based on the uniquely similar definitions of SEL and Orff (Edgar, 2017; CASEL, 2020), there is a current need for study in the field of intertwining the two methods and the research of its effects on students.

Currently, there are no scholarly findings that demonstrate that an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education produces more mindfully musical, SEL-aware, and musically aware students than those students who provided an Orff-only approach to music education. Music educators and researchers such as Edgar are speaking out on the importance of further research and implementation of SEL within music curricula such as the Orff approach (October 2020, virtual Orff Symposium presentation). Researchers Eren et al. (2013) have conducted studies on the separate effects of Orff and SEL when instructing autistic children in an educational setting. The research canvas is open and ready for focused studies on the results of implementing an SEL-embedded Orff approach to the music education classroom.

There is a need for this research because the philosophy of the Orff approach mirrors the philosophy of SEL in a truly unique manner. This researcher believes that evidence on this topic

will open opportunities for both further research and curriculum integration, as well as opportunities for new curriculum development for future classroom integration.

The findings of this research should matter greatly to music educators, classroom teachers, principals, professors, Orff level instructors, and curriculum writers. The findings will greatly impact future learning strategies, curriculum development, and teacher implementation. Research findings will be the first step in discovering if an SEL-embedded Orff approach creates higher learning levels in the musicality of students, as well as the social and emotional development of the students, which will then further prove helpful in all aspects of a student's social, emotional, and musical development. The integration of an SEL-embedded Orff approach curriculum (appendix F) will create a new and innovative style of teaching that seamlessly transitions both elements of the Orff approach in music education and SEL strategies into a successive path of positive student growth.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to test the outcome levels of an SEL-embedded Orff approach by comparing a control group classroom using an Orff-only approach with an experimental classroom using an SEL-embedded Orff approach curriculum for fourth-grade students.

The problem statement for this topic: Is an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education more effective than merely an Orff-only based teaching method? The researcher will determine if the outcomes from the experimental group show that an SEL-embedded Orff approach can effectively demonstrate different outcomes than the Orff-only classroom. Merriam-Webster (2021) defines the word effective as “producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect.” The use of the word embedded puts music at the focal point of the study. As much as SEL is important, it works in line with the music making process.

RQ1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

RQ2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

RQ3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental group?

Participants

The study was conducted within two fourth grade classes in a small Midwest Catholic School that is made up of 411 students with approximately 22 students in each classroom and two classes per grade level. The school contains 194 male and 192 female students. The student population of the school is made up of five ethnic groups, with the largest of these being Caucasian. This is followed by mixed students of two or more ethnicities Hispanic, Asian, and African American (TADS, 2021).

The research was considered a purposeful convenience sample as the researcher is also the music educator of the school. The fourth grade classes contain 16 and 17 students, respectively. These classes were chosen as the research samples because they have not received an SEL-embedded approach in music class leading up to the time of this study. The control group class received a traditional Orff approach to music education, which is the school's traditional methodology of choice; while the experimental group classroom received an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education. They were completely unbiased and uninfluenced in their understanding of SEL and its connection to music education and the Orff approach. To mitigate possible teacher-researcher bias, the class receiving the traditional Orff-only music education had their instruction first at the beginning of the week, while the experimental class was given their music education classes later in the week. This was set up to

prevent any unintentional influences of SEL in the control group classroom setting.

Parental consent forms (Appendix A) were given out to each parent within both the experimental and control group fourth grade classrooms. As a learning tool and to create a formal experience, after parental consent was received, the researcher provided each fourth-grade student with their own written assent forms.

Research Question One

The problem statement for this topic: Is an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education more effective than merely an Orff-only based teaching method? Merriam-Webster (2021) defines the word effective as “producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect.” The use of the word embedded puts music at the focal point of the study. As much as SEL is important, it works in line with the music making process.

RQ1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

When the components of SEL and collaborative music making work together within a space of empathy, respect, and positivity; students begin to uphold their understanding of music making and involve both their cognitive and emotional processes. This is the point when music making becomes a part of them personally. It is no longer simply an external source of creation, but a part of them. Defined as *mindfully musical*, this process is achieved when SEL is embedded into the Orff process of music making as a strategic teaching process. To be mindful in music making, students begin to piece together their own philosophy of music making. Students begin to think about their music making experience and become aware of new perspectives and ways of understanding the music making process (Stauffer, 2005).

The Orff approach is considered a progression of musical experiences in which students

guide their learning through creative collaboration in an inclusive environment where the fear of failing is extinguished. The process utilizes a specific scaffolding technique that moves from observation to imitation to experimentation, improvisation, literacy, and performance (Long, 2013; Salmon, 2012).

Data Collection Tools

The qualitative data collection tools utilized for this research question included a researcher-teacher field notes journal, which allowed the researcher to collect thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the research as it is taking place (Hayman et al., 2012). It allowed documentation of statements and actions made by participants in the midst of uninterrupted observation while in their natural learning environment. This tool was used as the researcher integrated herself with the students as a participant-observer (Zohrabi, 2013). This is a strong research tool because the writing included specific moments in which students demonstrated mindfully musical behavior and was written as reflective notes and observations of student progress, quotes, and any other documentation that demonstrates mindfully musical behavior. Utilizing a narrow focus, each observational journal entry concentrated on a single musical element as it corresponded with the research question (Zohrabi, 2013). It was a means for successfully examining the specific experiences of the participants as the SEL-embedded Orff approach was taught and applied. Journaling has long been considered a valid method of qualitative data collection (Hayman et al., 2012). It is purposeful in its execution of answering research questions (Zohrabi, 2013). The researcher-teacher journal will be stored in a locked storage cabinet at the researcher's home until October 2023 when the papers will be shredded and recycled.

The second data collection tool included a parent focus group that was compiled through

the same random selection method. With the purpose of both student buy-in and a reflection of student growth throughout the study, the parent discussions took place twice, both at the beginning and end of the research process. The goal of this data collection tool was to demonstrate measured student social and emotional growth from the perspective of the students' parents. The parent participants were asked if and how their children have demonstrated social and emotional growth throughout the research process. These two recorded discussions were recorded and transcribed on the researcher's MacBook through Zoom voice translator. These transcriptions will be saved until October 2023. At that time the transcriptions will be deleted from the computer hard drive.

Findings were shared with the participants to validate the results and the credibility of the study (Nyumba, 2017). This qualitative form of data collection will focus on a goal-oriented conversation so as to measure the attitudes, feelings, and experiences of the participants (Zohrabi, 2013). Focus group interviews are considered a valid meaningful form of data collection in drawing comparisons across individual participants and their statements (Nyumba, 2017). This is a vital research tool because focus group discussions create a safe space for the discovery of the unknown and often unexpected. It opens up negotiation and evaluation of research questions by capturing the experiential differences between people with similar backgrounds (Nyumba, 2017).

Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher-teacher field notes journal data collection tool included notes taken by the researcher while observing the students in both their learning and performance environments. Quotes and behaviors from students that demonstrate musically-mindful behaviors were recorded while lessons were taking place. Musically-mindful quotes and behavior included but were not

limited to the sharing of musicality and emotions or feelings that are embedded together within one action.

The parent focus group data analysis procedure began with the utilization of Zoom voice translation and transcribed the focus group discussions. The data analysis was then completed in three stages. The first stage was considered the initial coding process (Nyumba et al., 2017), which utilizes the use of code words to identify specific themes, the merging of ideas, and the connecting of relationships that were identified through diagrams between the themes. The second stage of the analysis process involved the focused coding (Nyumba et al., 2017), which honed in on only the keywords and themes of the focus group transcripts. Wider themes and less occurring words were eliminated from the analysis. This portion of the analysis yielded qualitative results that were drawn from comparisons between the experimental and control group classrooms. Lastly, the third stage narrowed down information that was put into categories to determine key patterns.

The indicators for drawing reasonable conclusions to answer research question number one included the researcher's journal and the parent discussion groups. These data collection tools were the indicators for drawing data conclusions. They will create detailed and informative data for analyzing both the thoughts and feelings of the students and the interpretive observations of the researcher, acting as a check and balance for data analysis. The researcher will link together observations of student spoken phrases, behaviors, and student artifacts to analyze key feelings, emotions, and student behaviors as they relate to research question one.

Research Question Two

RQ2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

Social-emotional learning has been defined through theory, framework, and practice within the areas of organizational psychology, education, and social sciences. According to Domitrovich et al. (2015), social-emotional learning is defined as the “framework to promote social, emotional and academic competence” in youth and “coordinate school-family-community” partnerships (p. 6). This definition has been further extended through the research efforts of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning organization (CASEL, 2020). The central tenant of SEL is to emphasize learning and growth that supports academic achievement (Jones & Doolittle, 2017), which is embedded within CASEL’s five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Data Collection Tools

This research question was measured with student perception surveys that were given out three times during the research process. These surveys utilized a 1-4 scale to analyze the results of the participants' answers. The three surveys were compared both between the two classes as well as to each other within the same class. This quantitative form of measurement focused on a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions allowed participants to reflect and respond exactly how they wanted and lead to greater discoveries, while the closed-ended questions provided strong statistical analysis (Zohrabi, 2013). The close-ended questions each have the following response options:

Not at all Somewhat Most of the time Very much.

Students circled the answer that best applied to their thoughts and feelings for each specific question.

The survey questions each corresponded with one of the three SEL components of

Identity, Belonging, and Agency (Edgar, 2021). The connections between the SEL components and the survey questions directly connected the thoughts and feelings of the students as they related to the three SEL components. This was the strongest tool for this research question because surveys are considered efficient and valid forms of quantitative data collection as they can be administered to a large number of people at once and thus acquire identical and correct data (Draugalis, 2008; Zohrabi, 2013). Within this study, the researcher administered the surveys to all participants at the same time, creating a high return rate and strong data validity. As one of the most important forms of quantitative data collection, it is often considered a supplement to focus group interviews and participant observations (Zohrabi, 2013).

The second research tool utilized to measure student SEL awareness included student focus groups for both the control and experimental classes. The focus group discussions followed an interview guide approach in which questions were prepared ahead of time (see appendix A) and semistructured to allow interviewees to express their unstructured thoughts and feelings (Zohrabi, 2013). The names of five students per class were drawn from a hat as a representative sample of the class population. The focus group discussions took place during school in the researcher's classroom and were recorded through the researcher's Macbook computer using Zoom Otter.ai. The recordings are stored on the researcher's computer until October 2023, when computer transcriptions will be deleted from the computer hard drive.

This process occurred twice for each class for a total of four separate student focus groups. Each class focus group met during both the middle and completion of the research process and lasted for approximately 45 minutes in length. The importance of these focus groups included a detailed description of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the student sample groups. The surveys asked students questions that focus on their personal experiences in their

SEL intelligence development. The focus group questions each corresponded with one of the three SEL components of Identity, Belonging, and Agency (Edgar, 2021). The connections between the SEL components and the focus group discussions directly connected the thoughts and feelings of the students as they related to the three SEL components. The focus groups determined whether the SEL-embedded Orff approach demonstrated SEL-aware students.

The focus group discussions began with an ice breaker question and continued with the following questions, which each specifically addresses a focus on musicality within the categories Identity, Belonging, or Agency.

1. How has this trimester been going for you all so far (ICE-BREAKER)?
2. Tell me an example of how your music abilities have grown throughout this trimester so far (MUSIC)?
3. Tell me an example of something you created or performed in music class that you were proud of? Why did this make you proud (MUSIC)?
4. What are some ways you have grown as a person because of music class (IDENTITY)?
5. What have been your favorite parts of music class so far? What about that made it your favorite (IDENTITY)?
6. What are some ways that you have grown in your understanding of your classmates (BELONGING)?
7. Can you tell me about a time this trimester when you were able to help out another student? How did it make you feel to help them out? What did it make you think about as you helped them (BELONGING)?
8. When you are creating and making music with your class, what are some things you have done to help out your classmates with their music creating and making skills (AGENCY)?

9. Can you tell me of a time this trimester when you were proud of a decision you made or an idea you came up with (AGENCY)?

It was the goal of the researcher that the group of five students interact together in their thoughts and shared experiences as they answered each question. The researcher continued to guide the discussion into more specific follow-up questions that specifically detailed the three components of SEL, as well as musicality. Musicality skills included the application of musical knowledge from the lesson in rhythmic and melodic accuracy.

A parent focus group was also chosen through the same random selection method. With the purpose of both student buy-in and a reflection of student growth throughout the study, the parent discussions took place twice, both at the beginning and end of the research process. The goal of this data collection tool was to demonstrate student SEL growth from the perspective of the students' parents. The parent participants were asked if and how their children have demonstrated social and emotional growth throughout the research process. These two discussions were recorded on the researcher's MacBook computer through Zoom voice translator, where the transcriptions will be saved until October 2023. At that time the transcriptions will be deleted from the computer hard drive.

Findings were shared with the participants to validate the results and the credibility of the study (Nyumba, 2017). This qualitative form of data collection focused on a goal-oriented conversation so as to measure the attitudes, feelings, and experiences of the participants (Zohrabi, 2013). Focus group interviews are considered a valid meaningful form of data collection in drawing comparisons across individual participants and their statements (Nyumba, 2017). This is a vital research tool because focus group discussions create a safe space for the discovery of the unknown and often unexpected. It opens up negotiation and evaluation of research questions by capturing the experiential differences between people with similar

backgrounds (Nyumba, 2017).

The fourth data collection tool included student artifacts of writings, pictures, and musical compositions. These articles were created during the lessons and specifically demonstrated the three SEL components of Identity, Belonging, and Agency (Edgar, 2021). These artifacts will be held in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home until October 2023, when they will be shredded and recycled. The artifacts data collection tool was a key component for this research question because it provided clear and honest visual representations of how students were progressing in their development of SEL behaviors and thoughts. The artifacts were analyzed based on their identification to the three SEL components (Edgar, 2021). This data collection method was an additionally vital tool because it provided external data from the students but was intricately connected to their thoughts and feelings.

Lastly, a researcher-teacher field notes journal captured quotes, behaviors, and insightful SEL observations from both the control and experimental group as they engaged in their respective music class activities. This is an important element of the research process as it captured the real and raw thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of the two groups as they engaged with their lessons.

Data Analysis Procedures

The student perception survey data analysis procedure utilized a 1-4 measurement scale to analyze the results of the participants' answers and compared the control group's responses with those of the experimental group. A codebook was used for data entry and spot-checking from original survey instruments for data verification. The codebook utilized the following symbols for both the experimental and control group classroom samples:

1=Not at all 2=Somewhat 3=Most of the time 4=Very much.

The statistical procedure was calculated on the researcher's MacBook computer using SPSS software and the data were analyzed utilizing both a two-way ANOVA test and independent-sample *t*-tests to calculate any significant differences between the three surveys within the control group classroom and the experimental group classroom. This analysis provided statistical information regarding a set of data and provided a set of generic statistical findings comparing the three survey results of the control group classroom and the experimental group classroom. The test determined if there was statistical significance between the three surveys within the control and experimental groups. As an analysis of variance, the ANOVA test is considered valid and reputable. It requires normality, independence, and equal variances of samples to be satisfied, thus its stringent requirements provide a strong backdrop for reliability (Kim, 2017). An ANOVA requires data obtained from a normal distribution population through a sampling method, the experiment must utilize a sampling method, and the data variances within each level of the process must be equal and independent (Mahapoonyanont et. al, 2010).

Independent samples *t*-tests were then performed to evaluate pairwise differences for pretests (experiment vs. control), posttests (experiment vs. control), and pretest-posttest differences for each of the two groups (experiment vs. control). Although a *t*-test is often used for larger sample sizes, research has shown that a *t*-test on small sample sizes is effective when measuring samples of equal variances (de Winter, 2013).

The student focus group data analysis procedure began with the utilization of Zoom Otter.ai to transcribe the focus group discussion. The data analysis was then completed in three stages. The first stage was considered the initial coding process (Nyumba et al., 2017), which utilized the use of code words to identify specific themes, the merging of ideas, and the connecting of relationships identified through diagrams between the themes. The second stage of

the analysis process involved the focused coding (Nyumba et al., 2017), which honed in on only the keywords and theme of the focus group transcripts. Wider themes and then occurring words were eliminated from the analysis. This portion of the analysis yielded qualitative results that were drawn from comparisons between the experimental and control group classrooms. Lastly, the third stage narrowed down information that was inserted into categories to determine key patterns.

The parent focus group data analysis followed the same procedure but took place at the beginning and completion of the research process and included two discussions per class. As with the student focus groups, the researcher coded the data in three stages. The first stage was considered the initial coding process (Nyumba et al., 2017), which utilized the use of code words to identify specific themes, the merging of ideas, and the connecting of relationships were identified through diagrams between the themes. The second stage of the analysis process involved the focused coding (Nyumba et al., 2017), which honed in on only the keywords and theme of the focus group transcripts. Wider themes and infrequent words were eliminated from the analysis. Lastly, the third stage narrowed down information that was inserted into categories to determine key patterns. The results were then pieced together into a findings report that is found in chapter four. The discussions were recorded and transcribed through Zoom voice translator and are stored in the researcher's MacBook computer until October 2023.

The student artifacts data analysis was analyzed based on Edgar's (2021) three SEL components of Identity, Belonging, and Agency. The student artifacts were held by the researcher in both hard copy form and as scanned copies on the researcher's personal Macbook computer until October 2023.

Lastly, the researcher-teacher field notes journal data analysis will be coded and analyzed based on Edgar's (2021) three SEL components of Identity, Belonging, and Agency. The researcher's field notes journal will be held by the researcher in hard copy form until October 2023.

The indicators for drawing reasonable conclusions to answer research question two included the student perception surveys, student focus groups, parental focus groups, student artifacts, and researcher-teacher field notes. These research tools served to link data results together as a check and balance. The tools complement each other and strengthen the findings as it was the hope of the researcher that all data collection tools point to the same research results. The researcher pulled keywords and themes from both the open-ended survey questions and discussion transcripts to align findings with Edgar's (2021) three SEL components. Both the qualitative and quantitative findings are paired together to create robust and multi-angled findings that clearly connect to research question two.

Research Question Three

RQ: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental group?

The Orff-Schulwerk Association website (2020a) states that the Orff experience releases creativity that extends far beyond the music classroom. Orff and Keetman conceived an approach to building musicianship in every learner through the integration of music, movement, speech, and drama. This dissertation will refer to musicality in the relativistic view that Carl Orff adhered to in his philosophy of music education.

Data Collection Tools

The first data collection tool for this research question included a weekly lesson assessment rating of 1 through 5. A rating of 1 demonstrated students did not reach the lesson

goal and was unable to effectively apply the lesson content. A 5 rating demonstrated the students reached their lesson goal and effectively applied the lesson content. The rating was based on the specific musicianship addressed within the lesson (Appendix F) and corresponded with the lesson's rubric. Each weekly lesson rating was written in the researcher-teacher journal along with a detailed explanation of the lesson and why the rating was chosen. This was a vital data collection tool because observational field notes clarify, enhance, and interpret the quantitative data of participant musicality skills while providing reflection opportunities for the researcher (Friedemann, 2011). These observational notes and corresponding daily assessment ratings worked together with the focus group discussions to provide supportive evidence of validity for both data collection tools.

Observations are commonly combined with surveys and interviews to create a data triangularization for findings validation (Zohrabi, 2013). The use of these qualitative and quantitative data tools provides complementation strengths (Johnson, 2006). The researcher chose to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools so as to create a complementation triangulation. Each tool focuses on a specific research question from a different angle of research and analysis, creating analytic accuracy (Johnson, 2006).

The second research tool utilized to measure student musicality included student focus groups for both the control and experimental group classes. The focus group discussions followed the same interview guide approach listed for research question two. The names of five students per class were drawn from a hat as a representative sample of the class population. The focus group discussions took place during school in the researcher's classroom and were recorded and transcribed with the researcher's Macbook computer using Zoom otter.ai. The recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal MacBook computer until October 2023,

when computer transcriptions will be deleted from the computer's hard drive.

This focus group collection tool occurred twice for each class for a total of four separate student focus groups. Each class focus group met during both the middle and completion phases of the research process and lasted approximately forty-five minutes each in length. The importance of these focus groups includes a detailed description of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the student sample group. The surveys asked students questions that focused on their personal experiences in their musical development. The focus group discussions began with an ice breaker question and continued with the following questions, which each specifically addresses a focus on musicality within the categories Identity, Belonging, or Agency (see page 52).

It was the goal of the researcher that the group of five students interact together in their thoughts and shared experiences as they answered each question. Musicality skills included the application of musical knowledge from the lesson in rhythmic and melodic accuracy.

Lastly, a researcher-teacher field notes journal captured quotes, behaviors, and insightful musically aware observations from both the control and experimental group as they engaged in their respective music class activities. This is an important element of the research process as it captures the real and raw thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of the two groups as they engage with their lessons.

Data Analysis Procedures

The weekly lesson assessment rating data were analyzed through a comparison of rubric results between both the control and experimental groups. This analysis determined if students developed stronger musicality skills within the SEL-embedded Orff experimental group classroom versus the Orff-only control group classroom. These quantitative scores were

compared with the qualitative data from the recorded student performances as a check and balance for research validity and alignment.

The student focus group data analysis procedure was transcribed with the researcher's Macbook computer using Zoom Otter.ai. The data analysis was then completed in three stages. The first stage considered the initial coding process (Nyumba et al., 2017), which utilizes the use of code words to identify specific themes, the merging of ideas, and the connecting of relationships which will be identified through diagrams between the themes. The second stage of the analysis process involved the focused coding (Nyumba et al., 2017), which honed in on only the keywords and theme of the focus group transcripts. Wider themes and then occurring words were eliminated from the analysis. This portion of the analysis yielded qualitative results that are drawn from comparisons between the experimental and control group classrooms. Lastly, the third stage narrowed down information and was put into categories to determine key patterns.

Lastly, the researcher-teacher field notes journal data analysis coded and analyzed based on specific behaviors and verbiage that demonstrated musically aware student development. The researcher-teacher field notes journal will be held by the researcher in hard copy form until October 2023.

In conclusion, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools strengthened both the validity and findings of the research data (Zohrabi, 2013). This triangulation process connected the various data collection tools together as complementary strengths (Johnson, 2006) as the process included the strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative research.

Data Tools Collection Binder

In an effort to keep all data tool collection organized and separated, the researcher utilized a separate data collection tools binder for each of the fourth-grade classes. Each binder contained tabs for each lesson and within these tabs, the rubrics, researcher-teacher journal entries, artifacts, and any other data collection for that specific lesson were documented. Each lesson data collection tool utilized its own formatted document for each research question so that all data was safely separated to mitigate cross-contamination between research questions and data collection tools. The Orff portions of each lesson were taught exactly the same for both experimental and control group classes. The SEL elements were only implemented within the experimental group classroom instruction. The lesson database is available in Appendix F.

Teacher Journal

Because she was both the researcher and teacher, the researcher was presented with a particularly challenging task within this study. In an effort to connect the bridge between both of these important tasks, a personal journal will be utilized during the entirety of the research process. This journal will include the thoughts, feelings, challenges, and joys of the researcher and teacher role. This journal will not be considered a data collection tool, but instead, a means for documenting the specific experiences of the author.

Strengths and Limitations

This study contains several strengths that will enrich the validity of the findings. These strengths include personal knowledge of the curriculum and previous usage of and familiarity with SEL component techniques and methods in the Orff approach. The researcher utilized an entire summer to strengthen and solidify the curriculum before the research process begins. The mixed methods design choice is a further strength, as it allowed for a robust study that included varying perspectives from both students and parents. This design allowed for a broad and

detailed picture of the research and its results. Finally, because the researcher has been an educator at the school for three years, the students are comfortable with the instructor and have built a strong and trusting teacher-student relationship, allowing students to feel comfortable with taking risks and trying new opportunities.

The results of this study provided interdisciplinary collaboration with classroom teachers, a continued goal to uphold music education as a core curriculum subject, provide opportunities for collaboration with a cross-curricular common language, curriculum development, assessment strategies, and future long-term studies. The results of this study further benefit students, educators, curriculum writers, higher ed instructors, principals, and music organizations such as AOSA (American Orff-Schulwerk Association), and NAFME (National Association for Music Education)

The limitations of this study included the use of a purposeful convenience sample, but because both fourth-grade classes had not previously worked with a social and emotional curriculum, the students were unbiased and set up as a strong research sample.

A secondary limitation is the potential to have had the experimental group curriculum accidentally implemented into the control group lessons. To mitigate this possible bias, the control group class receiving the traditional Orff-only music education had their classes scheduled at the beginning of the week, while the experimental class was given their music education instructions later in the day (see appendix F).

Ethics

The participant sample included fourth-grade students from a small Midwest Catholic school. Because this study was in educational research and was conducted on minors, there were several methods of ethical standards were put into place. Educational research can be defined as

a scientific field of study that works with the educational system and learning processes. It often involves human interactions through various organizations and institutions that create educational outcomes. Educational research utilizes appropriate methods that seek improvements and innovative tools for further development within the educational field (AERA, 2021).

In addition to IRB and archdiocesan approval, a letter of permission from the principal of the school and the superintendent of the Archdiocese was in place before the research began. Parent letters of permission went out to every fourth-grade family. If a family chose to withdraw student participation, the student received the same music education instruction but was not included in any discussion groups, data collection, or visual art documentation. Students were fully aware of their role within the study and were provided the option to opt-out of activities if they did not feel comfortable. Due to a few unforeseen COVID-directed virtual learning pivots, the research period was extended by two weeks and all parents signed updated permission forms for this research extension.

This mixed methods study was guided by a pragmatic paradigm. This worldview framework focuses on the research question, communication, and shared meaning-making. The pragmatic researcher holds research findings transferred from one scenario to another. The researcher is subjective in personal reflection and objectivity in data analysis. These characteristics directly applied to the ethics of this research in that the researcher was able to conduct the lessons with an open mind and strong communication with the participants. The researcher utilized the sensitivity and personal reflection as the process unfolded. Students were never forced to participate without their full understanding and consent of each lesson. Students were made aware of weekly lesson goals and expectations. Students gave their consent to any class recordings and documentation of their visual art and writings. Before publication,

participants were made aware of their roles within the findings and the documentation of the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to test the outcome levels of an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education by comparing a control group classroom using an Orff-only curriculum with an experimental classroom using an SEL-embedded Orff curriculum for fourth-grade students.

The Research Questions

The problem statement for this topic: Is an SEL-embedded Orff music approach more impactful than solely an Orff-only approach to music education? Defined as “producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect” (Merriam-Webster, 2021), the researcher will determine if the outcomes from the experimental group classroom show that an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education can effectively demonstrate different outcomes from the Orff-only control group classroom. The use of the word embedded situates music at the focal point of the study as the SEL components work in line with the music-making process.

This problem statement prompted the research study journey and was broken down into three specific categories that describe what three elements will be specifically analyzed in the study.

RQ 1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicianship between the control and experimental groups?

A. Is there a difference between field notes in mindfully musical behavior and language observations?

B. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in mindfully musical language?

RQ 2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental groups?

A. Is there a difference between student survey results in SEL-aware student data results?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in SEL-aware language?

C. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in SEL-aware language?

D. Is there a difference between artifacts in SEL-aware student creations?

E. Is there a difference between field notes in SEL-aware behavior and language?

RQ 3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental groups?

A. Is there a difference between student rubric results in musically aware student performances?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in musically aware language?

C. Is there a difference between field notes in musically aware behavior and language observations?

Research Design

The researcher holds to a pragmatist paradigm worldview which refers to research that occurs within a social context and focuses on the very best understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic paradigm targets research with the belief that the world is viewed through personal human experience. Knowledge is obtained through these experiences and people's knowledge and understanding (Kaushik et al., 2019). This view focuses on seeking out several approaches in data collection while honing in on the what and how questions of research outcomes.

In determining the research approach through the lens of a convergent process and pragmatic paradigm, the interaction needs were compared between the quantitative and

qualitative strands. It was determined that both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches carry unique and valid options for this research. This mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research designs with a greater breadth and depth of data analysis. This approach also allows for diverse data collection options that implement the instruments of both the qualitative and quantitative designs. The analysis of a mixed methods design creates opportunities to analyze and process data in several different ways, including external statistical, internal statistical, analytical, case-to-case, and naturalistic (Comb, 2013). These opportunities for flexibility further the strength of the research process validity and data findings. The strengths of a mixed method design include the collecting and analyzing of both qualitative and quantitative data, the rigorous collecting and analyzing of data, the integration of the data during the collection and analysis, and the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools either at the same time or separately (Wisdom, 2013). This design best fits the researcher's topic as it includes both qualitative (experiences of the students, parents, and researcher while learning through the curriculum) and quantitative (generalized statistical evidence to verify there was truly a transfer of knowledge and change in behavior) elements to demonstrate the findings of the research study.

Data Collection Techniques

Within this mixed methods design, qualitative data were collected through two-parent and student discussion groups for each control and experimental class, a researcher-teacher field notes journal, and student artifacts. Quantitative data included student surveys filled out three times by students in both the control and experimental groups and weekly lesson performance rubrics filled out by the researcher/teacher.

Research Sample

Within this convenience sample, both fourth-grade control and experimental classes contained fourteen students. The control group contained seven boys and seven girls, while the experimental group contained eight boys and six girls. The groups were chosen based solely on their placement within the teaching schedule. In an effort to keep the lessons and instruction completely separate and undiluted, it was predetermined the control class would be the first class in the teaching schedule. Their classes met Monday and Thursday each week, while the experimental class had music on Wednesday and Fridays.

Explanation of Data Analysis Process Research Question One

RQ 1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

The researcher has defined musically mindful as when the five components of SEL and collaborative music-making work together within a space of empathy, respect, and positivity; students begin to uphold their understanding of music-making and involve both their cognitive and emotional processes in uniformity with each other. This is the point when music-making becomes a part of them personally. It is no longer simply an external source of creation, but an artistic extension of their being. This is what will be labeled mindfully musical. This process is achieved when both SEL and the Orff process of music-making are embedded together in a strategic teaching process. To be mindful of music-making, students begin to piece together their own philosophy of music-making. Students begin to think about their music-making experience and become aware of new perspectives and ways of understanding the music-making process (Stauffer, 2005). When students create music in the participatory style of learning, teachers observe

. . . flowing expressiveness children manifest when they move does not always translate to playing instruments or singing, particularly when it involves more focused aspects of musical understanding, such as reading. When students are moving, students understand musical ideas instinctively in a way that formal, symbol-based musical ideas cannot convey. (Lawton, 2020, p. 21)

Custodero describes this feeling as immersing oneself so deeply in the musical experience that we forget about ourselves and what we are physically doing and become unified with our music-making (2002).

Researcher Teacher Field Notes Journal

Within the data collection process, the researcher identified musically mindful behavior within the experimental group through their performances. One field note entry states on October 13, 2021, “Students are focusing more on the feelings connected to the instrument sound (how hard, soft, smooth, fast they play), than the rhythm attached to the color/feeling. They are finding more relevance and natural gravitation towards the feeling aspect vs. the musical aspect.”

Later in this lesson, a student stated, “I can make many different sounds with one instrument because that is the power of music.” A journal field note from December 10, 2021 states, “Today in music class as the students performed their Jingle Bell Orff ensemble, there was a sense of incredible emotional connection and glue between the ensemble members. It moved from beyond musicality and into a realm of students making choices to hold each other together as they performed. Stronger students were supporting the weaker performers and together they were united in what I can only describe as a cheerleader type pyramid of musical support.”

Within the data collection process, the researcher identified the control group gradually became more focused and attuned to their role as musicians and the instrumental parts they were

creating both individually and as a group. On October 14, 2021, a field note states, “It is becoming strongly evident that this class is growing stronger in their music skills. I was very impressed with their rhythmic accuracy in this compositional activity (Halloween compositions, Appendix F).” Later, on January 3rd, 2022 a field note stated, “Students were assigned parts and instructed to practice in small groups. I observed they did this with minimal guidance and their sounds were incredibly musical—even the drums were soft, calm, and attuned to the beat. The music-making process flowed quickly and efficiently.”

Parent Focus Groups

During the second round of focus group discussions, the parents discussed observations of their kids singing, practicing, and listening to more music. They also observed that because their kids were more aware of its positive effects, they were using music to calm their emotions and put their bodies in a positive place. One control group parent stated, “I couldn’t stand my music teacher. I feel like for us it was just like a box, like go here. There wasn’t that joy. We didn’t feel like we could create anything unless we actually do want to play something and so I do think I see a total difference in the way that they learn and the way I was taught.” Parents also observed their students were proud and confident in the Christmas concert because they had honed in on and strengthened their musical skills. Lastly, the control group parents observed their students truly enjoy music class and have fun.

Meanwhile, during the second round of focus group discussions for the experimental parents, participants verbalized both surprise and excitement about their children’s confidence and musical skill development. They also observed a greater desire for making and listening to music. Lastly, the parents discussed music preference growth in their children, acknowledging the children have stronger opinions on the types of music they desire to hear.

Through In Vivo coding, data collected from the second parent discussion groups showed an overall higher number of verbiage that combined both SEL and musicality driven topics. Keywords from the parent discussion group include Connection with music, Balance of emotions, Excitement for music, and Creating (see Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of Music and SEL verbiage between the experimental and control group parents

| Class | Musicality | SEL | Both (Mindfully Musical) |
|--------------|------------|-----|--------------------------|
| Experimental | 5 | 18 | 4 |
| Control | 7 | 7 | 3 |

In conclusion, the experimental group data analysis from both the researcher-teacher field notes and parent discussion groups demonstrate that the experimental classroom shared specific moments of engaging in mindfully musical experiences. The mindfully musical experiences were felt within the room by both the researcher and the students during several of their in-class performances. Although students did not verbally express these specific feelings, the statements recorded by the researcher support the emotional responses from the mindfully musical moments of engagement. The parent discussion groups also supported these moments in their verbiage about their children’s abilities to connect with the music and utilize it to calm their bodies.

The control group data analysis from both the researcher-teacher field notes and parent discussion groups demonstrated that the student control group shared specific moments of

teamwork and developmental growth in their musical skills. This then produced more confident and independent musicians. It also demonstrates that the Orff approach is a successful tool for implementing a music education curriculum for fourth-grade students.

In answer to research question one, the researcher's teacher field notes recorded a difference in mindfully musical behavior between the control and experimental classes. The control and experimental parent focus groups also demonstrated a difference as parents discussed how their children expressed their thoughts and engaged in the music-making process.

Explanation of Data Analysis Process Research Question One

RQ 2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

Student Surveys

Students within both the control and experimental classes were given pre, mid, and post research period surveys. These questions each touched on one of Edgar's condensed SEL domains of Identity, Belonging, and Agency (2021), and asked the following questions:

1. I feel the things I have learned in music class this year have strengthened my understanding of my feelings (SELF).
2. I feel I have grown stronger this year in my ability to manage my feelings while I create and perform with my classmates (SELF).
3. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of my abilities (SELF).
4. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have improved my ability to work with my classmates in positive ways (OTHERS).
5. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of my classmates and the world (people, cultures, and traditions) around me can be the same or different from me (OTHERS).

6. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of the importance of celebrating the things that are the same and different about the world (people, cultures, and traditions) around me (OTHERS).
7. I feel music class this year has helped strengthen my ability to communicate and make positive choices (DECISIONS).
8. I feel music class this year has given me a safe and comfortable place where I can problem-solve while I create and perform music (DECISIONS).
9. I feel music class activities this year have helped me understand that the thoughts I think, the feelings I feel, and the actions that I make are all connected together (DECISIONS).

Students provided answers to these questions within the Likert scale responses of:

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

A two-way ANOVA and independent *t*-tests compared the differences between groups and the respective survey results. These results are demonstrated in tables 2, 3, and 4.

Assumptions and Power Analysis

The first step in performing a two-way ANOVA is to evaluate the assumptions of the test. The first assumption is that the dependent variable is measured on a continuous scale. The survey used was measured on a Likert-type scale with four possible values, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*). This measure is at the interval level and is continuous. This assumption was satisfied. The next assumption is that the scores were obtained from a random sample. Although this assumption was not satisfied for this study, most real-world educational studies do not meet this assumption (Pallant, 2013).

The next assumption is the independence of observations. In most studies, pretest-posttest measurements are treated as repeated measures because the observations are not independent. However, in the current study, this assumption could not be met for two reasons.

Table 2*Distributions of Experimental and Control Groups, by Pretest and Posttest*

| Variable | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Experimental group | | | |
| Pretest | 14 | 2.01 | 0.93 |
| Posttest | 13 | 2.90 | 0.86 |
| Total | 27 | 2.44 | 0.99 |
| Control group | | | |
| Pretest | 15 | 2.32 | 0.90 |
| Posttest | 14 | 3.05 | 0.90 |
| Total | 29 | 2.67 | 0.96 |
| Total | | | |
| Pretest | 29 | 2.17 | 0.91 |
| Posttest | 27 | 2.98 | 0.87 |
| Total | 56 | 2.56 | 0.97 |

Table 3*Test of Between-Subjects Effects*

| Source | Type III SS | <i>df</i> | MS | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|--------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| Corrected model | 9.95 | 3 | 3.32 | 4.11 | .011 | 0.19 |
| Intercept | 368.32 | 1 | 368.32 | 456.15 | <.001 | 0.90 |
| Group | 0.74 | 1 | 0.74 | 0.92 | .342 | 0.02 |
| Time | 9.15 | 1 | 9.15 | 11.33 | .001 | 0.18 |
| Group * time | 0.09 | 1 | 0.09 | 0.11 | .740 | 0.00 |
| Error | 41.99 | 52 | 0.81 | | | |

Note. SS = sum of squares. MS = mean square.

Table 4*Comparisons of Means for Experiment and Control Groups, by Pretest-Posttest*

| Test | Levene's test | | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | MD | SED | 95% confidence interval |
|--|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------|------|-------------------------------|
| | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | | | | | | |
| Pretest, experiment to control | 0.16 | .69 | 1.00 | 27 | .32 | 0.33 | 0.33 | [-0.35, 1.02] |
| Posttest, experiment to control | 0.25 | .62 | 0.43 | 25 | .67 | 0.14 | 0.33 | [-0.54, 0.82] |
| Control group, pretest to posttest | 0.08 | .78 | -2.18 | 27 | .039 | -0.73 | 0.34 | [-1.42, -0.04] |
| Experiment group, pretest to posttest | 0.32 | .58 | -2.58 | 25 | .016 | -0.89 | 0.34 | [-1.60, -0.18] |

Note. MD = mean difference. SED = standard error of difference

The first reason is that the pretest sample size and the posttest sample size were different. The second, more important, reason is that pretest scores and posttest scores were all anonymous and therefore could not be matched with each other. For the purpose of this study, the pretest and posttest scores will be treated as independent observations. This inability to perform a repeated-measures ANOVA is a limitation of this study.

The next assumption is a normal distribution. Although the mean scores in this study did not show a good normal distribution, for a sample size above 30, the violation of this assumption does not cause serious problems (Pallant, 2013).

Finally, the sample should be obtained from populations of equal variances. This

assumption was met according to the results of Levene's test for equality of variances. The results of Levene's test for this study were $F(3, 52) = 0.134, p = .94$, indicating that the error variance of the dependent variable was equal across groups.

Both an a priori and a post hoc power analysis were performed for these data. According to the a priori power analysis, a two-way ANOVA, assuming a medium effect size f of 0.25 and an alpha significance level of .05 to achieve an 80% power for the study. However, in the current study the sample size was only 56, and the achieved power of the study was only 30%. This result indicates that there was a 70% chance to miss a significant result in the data. For this reason, all results not showing statistical significance should be interpreted with great caution.

Results

A two-way ANOVA was performed to analyze the pretest-posttest differences between the experimental group and the control group. The group differences (experimental vs. control) were not significant, $F(1, 52) = 0.92, p = .34$, partial eta squared = 0.02. The time differences (pretest vs. posttest) were significant, $F(1, 52) = 11.33, p = .001$, partial eta squared = 0.18. There was no interaction effect between group and time, $F(1, 52) = 0.11, p = .74$, partial eta squared = 0.002. Table 2 shows the results of the two-way ANOVA.

The results mean that both the control and experimental group experienced significant improvements in self-reported SEL-aware skills, but there was no evidence of a significant difference between the SEL-embedded Orff approach to music instruction and Orff-only music instruction. There was also no evidence of an interaction effect between group and time. Importantly, the low power of the study (30%) indicates a possibility that a significant result was missed in the analysis.

Independent samples *t*-tests were then performed to evaluate pairwise differences for pretests (experiment vs. control), posttests (experiment vs. control), and pretest-posttest differences for each of the two groups (experiment vs. control). Equal variances were assumed for all tests. The pretest difference between the experimental group and the control group was not significant, $t(27) = 1.00, p = .32$. The posttest difference between the experimental group and the control group was not significant, $t(25) = 0.43, p = .67$. The pretest-posttest difference for the control group was not significant, $t(27) = -2.18, p = .039$. The pretest-posttest difference for the experiment group was significant, $t(25) = -2.58, p = .016$. The results for the independent samples *t*-tests confirmed the conclusion that both the control and experimental group experienced significant improvements in self-reported SEL-aware students, but there was no evidence of a significant difference between SEL-embedded music instruction and Orff-only music instruction.

Student Control Focus Groups

The first student control focus group discussion highlighted areas of social and emotional learning. The students discussed the feelings music can provide when they need to relax or calm their bodies, but the majority of the discussion centered around how to grow as musicians. Students also discussed friendship, problem-solving, brainstorming, and the understanding of teammates better within a group setting.

The second student control group discussion shifted more towards the musicality within-group performances. Students lead back to the idea that if they help each other, they can create a good performance. Students also reiterated the value of music as a calming experience.

Through In vivo coding, and the theming of code words, the data demonstrated that the

control group viewed teamwork as valuable for musicianship to produce a strong musical performance.

Student Experimental Focus Groups

The first student experimental focus group discussion had strong connections between *Agency* and *Belonging*. Students continually brought up that they worked in groups together and that they could make decisions that benefited both parties. Students focused their discussion topics on mindfully musical elements such as calming music that helps to alleviate angry/mad feelings. During the first experimental discussion group, students were asked: “What are some ways that you have grown in your understanding of your classmates better because of music class?” Students stated the following answers:

“We could work as a team and share our ideas then vote on what we thought sounded good.”

“Because I can see why they picked their ideas so you could understand what she picked and why.”

The second student experimental focus group discussion focused more on *Belonging* as it applies to music making experiences. There was a constant focus on the thoughts, feelings, ideas, and likes of other people, and being in a group helps to understand their perspectives while creating music together. It is almost as if the musicality and *Belonging* factors were combined together into one idea. There were also ideas of when others in their group provide ideas, it can make both people happy because they helped the other person. During this discussion group, students were asked, “What are some ways you have grown in your understanding of your classmates?” Students stated the following answers: “Probably some ways that people are different and if they would like to do different interesting things like how they like stuff and you can see their opinions,” and “It makes the music even better by using people’s different ideas.”

When asked, “How did it make you feel when you were helping people with the pattern?” A student responded:

Good, because if you do that it can make your music sound better. And it also kind of seems like they like it, it can make you happy too because it’s something that you both found that you liked. And it's always nice to help somebody.

It is evident that the first discussion results showed students understand *how* and *why* to work as a team, but by the end of the trimester, they were understanding the how and why to work as a team because they saw how it directly affected the quality of the music they were creating. Through In vivo coding, and the theming of code words, the data demonstrate that the experimental group views collaboration as a means to a successful performance. Lastly, it creates a sense of ownership for one’s own musical growth through practice and commitment. The overall theme presented is: Teamwork is valuable to help each other, create together, and build upon each other’s skill sets.

Parent Focus Groups

During the first control group parent focus group, the researcher observed that parents talked more about themselves when answering the questions, but did record that parents observed their children sing, practice, and listen to music. One parent discussed her daughter’s love for music and dance: “I would say for me that she loves music, she sings a lot. There’s the memorizing of songs. She knows probably more songs than I do. Yeah, I think there's always music and dance she loves to dance.” Parents also noted their children use music to calm their emotions and put them in a positive place, thus stating that students appear more aware of the positive effect of music. One parent noted an experience with her son:

. . . My son and I were watching a lot of the Bucks games, and he had the chance to go to

one pre-COVID, and we were talking about the game and he goes, mom, you know what makes it really fun is all the fun music they do, and I thought that was really interesting because the Bucs games are like concerts now.

The second control group parent focus group discussed their pride in their children's Christmas concert performance, specifically their confidence and excitement. One parent shared, I think I can relate it back to the excitement around the Christmas concert because that was, you know, such a build-up to that and getting to play like he played the drums for the Noel song, I think having her be excited about it is cool. I feel like the social pressures, they're so aware of other people and how they think about them so I don't know like the fact that she was confident and excited to do that in front of a big audience, I feel like that is growth.

Parents also spoke of their children's enjoyment of music class and their connection with music on a more personal level. One parent stated: "I definitely think Jack sings more, whether it's through the radio, or just repeating some of the songs like their Christmas concert songs. And I'll catch him and when I catch him, he definitely gets quiet quickly but I would say he's definitely singing more through the semester."

Another parent noted:

If he's having a tough night with mom and dad like he'll go upstairs and like, we know he needs on down and he turns on his music and he'll just sit in bed and like, that's kind of his you know relaxing and if we come in and talk, he lets us know he just needs to listen to his music . . . He's more aware of what helps him, and I think music definitely helps him focus and calm down, and, you know, get back to a level so you can talk to him.

During the first experimental parent focus group discussion, the conversation hovered over topics of surprise and excitement by student confidence and musical skill development. Parents observed their children had a greater desire to make and listen to music. The second experimental group parent discussion focused strongly on the maturity level of their children within domains of social and emotional learning. Every parent mentioned a sense of maturity and focus in their individual children. Parents also mentioned students had grown in their specifications of what music they preferred to listen to, as well as a greater desire to listen to music.

When asked, “What are some ways you have seen growth in your child because of music class?” An experimental group parent stated,

I noticed at the Christmas concert, and it blew me away; just his confidence. He is a fairly shy kid and just isn’t one that seeks the limelight and so he was super proud that night that he got out there and did that...that was a really cool thing to watch, and watch his growth in terms of competence.

When asked, “Has your child ever shared with you any thoughts, experiences, or feelings that have come specifically from music class?” An experimental group parent stated:

I am going to go back to the drums at the Christmas concert. I noticed they were all watching each other during the show and so I asked Jack about that after and he said they had this method between the four of them up there and when one of them was offbeat, they would give each other a look, and then they would tap their foot to try to help the other person, which I thought was really funny and cute. They used teamwork to get through the performance. Data collected from both experimental parent focus group discussions demonstrate an overall higher number of SEL and SEL/Music-based verbiage (see

Table 1). There were only two fewer music verbiage than the control group but one more SEL/Music verbiage, and 11 more SEL verbiage.

Student artifacts

Through the coding of student artifacts, three important pieces were examined to identify variances between the control and experimental group as it relates to SEL-embedded within the Orff approach.

On September 16th, 2021, students performed musical stories they had created in small groups. These stories were pieced together with the help of three story cards. Each group receive a card for the story character, object, and location. Students were instructed to create a story based on the cards and create a theme song that exemplified the story's character and plot. Students were provided with various percussion and pitched instruments to accomplish this task. The assignment took three to four class periods from the beginning to the final performance. Each student was then instructed to fill out a reflection form that describes how they felt and what they heard as they observed each musical story performance. Both the control and experimental class reflection sheets contained simple wording to describe what they heard, but the experimental group created pictures and used words to not only describe the musical instruments, but also the actions within the story that were demonstrated through the musical instruments (see examples in Figures 4 and 5).

On October 12th 2021, after reading *My Many Colored Days*, students created a color wheel that labels the many types of emotions they feel. Students added color to each emotion description slice. Lastly, students added a rhythmic symbol to each slice. With partners, students took turns spinning their wheels to create a rhythmic piece based on the rhythms spun.

Figure 4

Audience Reflection Sheets from two students within the experimental group classroom

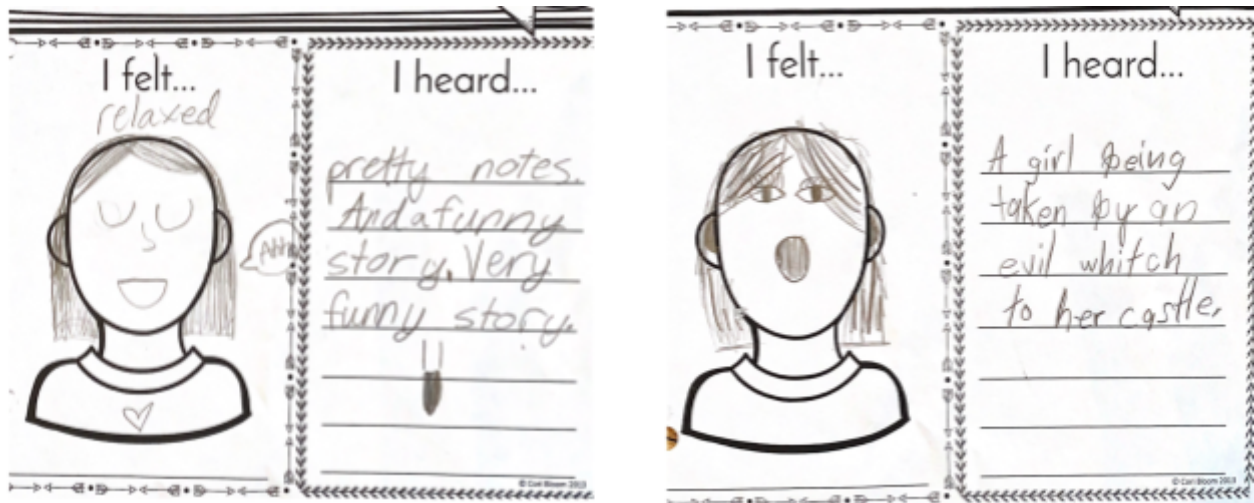


Figure 5

Audience Reflection Sheets from two students within the control group classroom

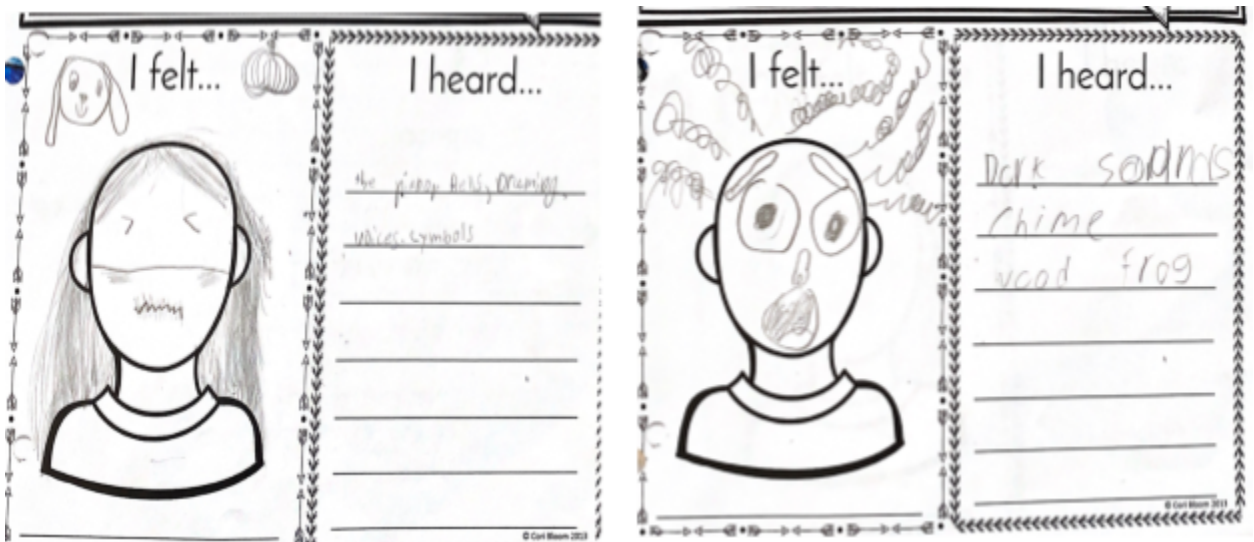
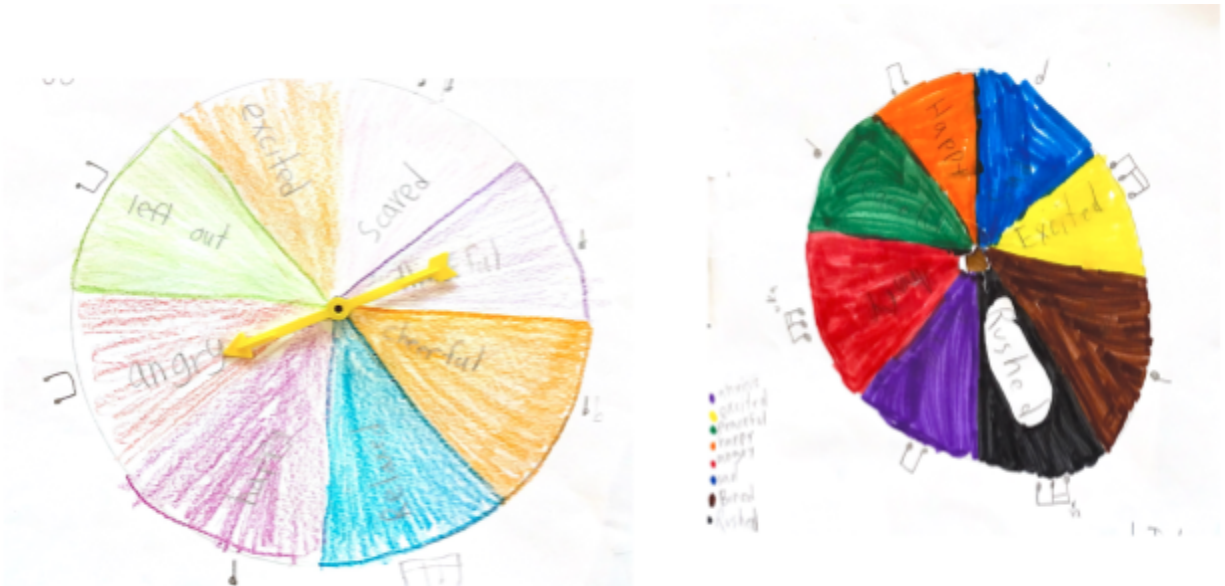


Figure 6

Music Wheel of Color from students within the experimental group



Note: Figure 6 demonstrates creativity and clear organization of both the musical element of rhythm and the feelings/color connection.

Figure 7

Music Wheel of Color from students within the control group



Note: Figure 7 demonstrates less creativity and sense of ownership over the SEL aspects of this project.

Figure 8

Journal reflection sheets from two students within the experimental group classroom

1. I made my own rhythm
on the xylophone. It felt
good to help make a
decision.

2. I loved being part of a
team and working together.

1. I helped by deciding
the beat and xylophone
part.

Our song made me
feel proud. It made me
feel happy.

2. It made me feel excited to
be in a team.

Figure 9

Journal Reflection sheets from two students within the control group classroom

1. I helped come up with
I xylophone parts & with
the mabe, It made me
feel like I was doing something
important.

2. It made me feel
helpful.

1. I did a Rhythm
it made Me Feel Happy.

2. it made me feel
Happy.

Students then worked individually to choose a few instruments whose timbre resembled the emotions on their wheels and practiced playing their rhythmic compositions. Through a side by side analysis of all control and experimental class artifacts, it was identified by the researcher that the experimental group used an overall greater amount of color detail, rhythmic articulation, and a wider range of emotions on their color wheels than the control group class (see examples in Figures 6 and 7).

Lastly, on January 12th, 2022, after reading *The Seashell* and discussing the various objects and scenes within an ocean setting, the sounds, and the feelings associated with these settings, students worked in small groups to create ocean-themed compositions. At the completion of the composition performances, students filled out reflection sheets that asked about their experience composing and working in a group to create and perform.

The experimental group's ocean composition reflection sheets demonstrate feelings of pride, decision making, accomplishment, teamwork, and happiness. The control group reflection sheets demonstrate feelings of importance and personal value in their individual contributions (see Figures 8 and 9).

Researcher Teacher Field Notes Journal

Within the data collection process, the researcher identified mindfully musical behavior within the experimental group through their performances. One field note entry states on October 13, 2021:

Students are focusing more on the feelings connected to the instrument sound (how hard, soft, smooth, or fast they play), than the rhythm attached to the color/feeling. They are finding more relevance and natural gravitation towards the feeling aspect vs. the musical aspect.

Later in this lesson, a student stated, “I can make many different sounds with one instrument because that is the power of music.” A field note from December 10, 2021 states:

Today in music class as the students performed their Jingle Bell Orff ensemble, there was a sense of incredible emotional connection and glue between the ensemble members. It moved from beyond musicality and into a realm of students making choices to hold each other together as they performed. Stronger students were supporting the weaker performers and together they were united in what I can only describe as a cheerleader type pyramid of musical support.

Within the data collection process, the researcher identified the control group gradually became more focused and attuned to their role as musicians and the instrumental parts they were creating both individually and as a group. On October 14, 2021, a field note states, “It is becoming strongly evident that this class is growing stronger in their music skills. I was very impressed with their rhythmic accuracy in this compositional activity (Halloween compositions, Appendix F).”

Later, on January 3rd, 2022 a field note stated, “Students were assigned parts and instructed to practice in small groups. I observed they did this with minimal guidance and their sounds were incredibly musical—even the drums were soft, calm, and attuned to the beat. The music making process flowed quickly and efficiently.”

On September 9, 2021 an excerpt from the researcher-teacher field notes journal includes the following entry for the experimental group:

Within the experimental group, there is a boy named B. He often struggles to stay on task and participate in a collaborative framework. I observed that for the first time, he not only focused but also collaborated and actively participated with his group. But I did

observe that when he was supposed to be filling out his audience observation/feelings sheet during the performance—he struggled to understand the directions and stay on task.

Within the group activities he is beginning to show growth and positive development, but the individual assignments he struggles to understand and keep up (September 17, 2021).

During the last week of data collection, the following entry was written: “Each group collaborated and listened to each other’s ideas. One group used rock, paper, and scissors to decide on the xylophone player. One group used paper and pencil to write out their song structure. The boy named B. quietly listened and joined in with the composing and performing process (January 12, 2022).

Within the control group, a field observation from December 9, 2021 states, “Students were guiding each other musically, keeping the beat in unity and stamina.” Later on January 3rd, 2022, the researcher observed, “Students were assigned parts and instructed to practice. I observed they did this in their groups with minimal guidance and the sounds were incredibly musical.

In conclusion, through the experimental data analysis of both student and parent discussion groups, a researcher-teacher field notes journal, student artifacts, and student surveys, it is evident that the student experimental group demonstrated a stronger understanding and application of SEL-aware behavior. The progression of their understanding of its value was demonstrated through their view of collaboration as a means to a successful performance appeared most evident within the discussion group sessions. During the second round of focus group discussions, the experimental group shifted their focus from musicality to a focus on working and caring for others. In contrast, the second focus group discussion for the control group students centered their discussion even more on musicality than their initial focus group

discussion. This answers research question two, that there was a difference in SEL language between the control and experimental focus groups. The parents expressed these same feelings as they shared their students' ability to work in unity together as evidenced in the Christmas concert. They also used more SEL-specific verbiage in their conversations than the control group parents. This answers research question two, that there was a difference in SEL language between the control and experimental group parents focus groups (see Table 1). The student artifacts demonstrate colorful, creative, and reflective thoughts on the value of Identity, Belonging, and Identity they made within the music making process (see Figures 4-9). This answers research question two, that there was a difference in SEL-aware artifacts between the control and experimental group classes. Lastly, the researcher teacher field notes journal clearly documents social growth from a specific student as he engaged in the SEL-embedded Orff approach. These notes also document observations of students collaborating and listening to each other as they create and practice their pieces. This answers research question two, that there was a difference in SEL-aware behavior and language between the control and experimental group classes in both the focus group discussions and class behaviors recorded in the researcher teacher field notes. Overall, the experimental group of students demonstrated a sense of ownership for their individual musical growth through practice and commitment. They valued teamwork as they helped each other, created together, and built upon each other's skill sets.

Lastly, a two-way ANOVA was performed to analyze the pretest-posttest differences between the experimental group and the control group. The group differences (experimental vs. control) were not significant. The results (see Table 2) show that both the control and experimental group experienced significant improvements in self-reported SEL-aware skills, but there was no evidence of a significant difference between an SEL-embedded Orff approach and

an Orff-only music instruction. The independent samples *t*-tests confirmed the conclusion that both the control and experimental groups experienced significant improvements in self-reported SEL-aware skills (see Table 3) and there was no evidence of a significant difference between an SEL-embedded Orff approach and an Orff-only music instruction. Both groups started out their pretests with no significant differences and both groups demonstrated significant growth from their posttests to their posttests.

In answer to research question two, the pretest student survey results demonstrate that students began the research process with no difference in their SEL awareness. At the end of the research process, the posttest survey results demonstrate both the control and experimental groups grew in their SEL awareness. The student focus groups demonstrate that the experimental class exhibited more SEL-aware thoughts and beliefs as their discussions centered on working and caring for others, while the control group remained focused on the value of strong musicianship. The experimental parent focus group strengthened these results with their conversational focus on teamwork and performance unity. They also used more SEL-aware language than the control group parents (see Table 1) in their second focus group discussions. The student artifacts from the experimental group demonstrate overall stronger creativity through verbiage and quality of artistry. Their reflection pieces also utilize more SEL-aware verbiage (see Figures 4-9), which focus on the domains of *Belonging* and *Agency*. Lastly, the researcher-teacher field notes show SEL-aware development in both words and actions within the experimental classroom. Students shifted from a focus on self to an understanding of the value of caring for others and working together as a team (*Belonging* and *Agency*).

Explanation of Data Analysis Process Research Question Three

RQ 3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental group?

Performance Rubrics

The researcher utilized weekly performance rubrics to track the musicality competence and growth of both the control and experimental group. The scale focuses on six questions:

1. Are students asking questions and verbalizing their understanding of the lesson subject?
2. Are students applying their knowledge of the lesson subject with their musical performance?
3. Are students demonstrating rhythmic accuracy as they perform their lesson piece?
4. Are students demonstrating melodic accuracy as they perform their lesson piece?
5. Are students working cohesively as an ensemble to perform their lesson piece?
6. Is the overall music performance sound musically accurate and pleasant to the ear?

The four possible responses include:

Not at all evident Somewhat evident Mostly evident Fully evident.

The class performance rubrics demonstrate the control and experimental group started out equally in musicality skills, but by mid-September, the experimental group slowly (and not always consistently) began to exceed the control group throughout the rest of the trimester. The experimental class completed the trimester with 48 ratings of “fully evident,” while the control group completed the trimester with 32 “fully evident” ratings (see Table 5). Both groups had 29 “fully evident” ratings on the same lesson rubrics. This leaves 19 extra “fully evident” ratings for the experimental group (see Table 5)

These findings demonstrate that the control group showed a gradual and steady increase in musicality development. Whereas, the experimental group had a growth delay at the beginning of the research before demonstrating steady growth in musical development. The experimental group required time to grow and develop their SEL skills before progressing

together in their musical development. They then excelled in their musical skills once they grasped and took hold of the SEL strategies.

The data demonstrate that the experimental group progressed in their musicality skills throughout the semester and slightly exceeded the control group by the end of the research period. As mentioned in research question two, the experimental group developed a sense of collaboration as a means to a successful performance. They developed a sense of ownership for each other’s musical growth and valued teamwork based on their ability to create and build upon each other’s skill sets.

Table 5

Comparison of lesson performance rubrics between control and experimental group classrooms

| Group | Week | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Control | 1 | Somewhat | Somewhat | Somewhat | N/A | Somewhat | Somewhat |
| Experiment | 1 | Mostly | Mostly | Somewhat | N/A | Fully | Fully |
| Control | 3 | Fully | Fully | N/A | N/A | Fully | N/A |
| Experiment | 3 | Mostly | Mostly | N/A | N/A | Mostly | N/A |
| Control | 5 | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly |
| Experiment | 5 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Control | 7 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Experiment | 7 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Control | 10 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Experiment | 10 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Control | 11 | Fully | Fully | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly |
| Experiment | 11 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |
| Control | 12 | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly | Mostly |
| Experiment | 12 | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully | Fully |

It is important to note that the performance rubrics do vary in scoring because there were days when not all rubric standards applied to the class lesson performance. For example, when both classes created and performed a rhythmic piece, there was no pitch involved in the performance and thus that rubric question did not apply.

Student Focus Groups

Through detailed coding and the labeling of pre-selected code words, the focus groups demonstrated that although the control group was given a strictly Orff-only approach to music education that was immersed in musical technique, the SEL-embedded Orff approach group scored comparably in musicality. The experimental group even scored higher in their greater use of keywords such as the words *Understand, Melody/Notes/Letters/Sound/Noise, Growth, and Music* (see Table 6).

As demonstrated in Table 6, the control group's initial focus group honed in on what it means to learn music better, build friendships, problem solve, brainstorm, and better understand teammates within a group setting (see Figure 10). The second control group focus discussion shifted topics and honed in on the musicality of the class performances. Students continually led back to the idea that if they help each other, they can produce a better musical performance. Through the use of In Vivo coding their conversation translated to the statement: Teamwork is valuable to musicianship in order to produce a strong musical performance.

The experimental focus group spoke intuitively of the connections between the decision-making process (Agency) and its impact on others (Belonging). Students repeatedly

Figure 10

Control class second focus group word cloud

beat choose **composing** counting
friend **group** grow hard **help**
ideas instruments
learn listening **making**
melody **partner** performing
pick **playing** proud rhythm
team **together**

Note: This word cloud comes from the control group words used in Table 6. The word sizes are dependent on the quantity of their usage.

Figure 11

Experimental class second focus group word cloud

beat challenge choose
combining composing
counting creating friendship
group growth **help**
ideas instruments
learn making melody
music notes opinions
partner performing
playing **proud** rhythm
team think **together**

Note: This word cloud comes from the experimental group words used in Table 6. The word sizes are dependent on the quantity of their usage.

discussed the connection between working together in groups creates opportunities for decisions to benefit both parties. There were fewer musicality topics addressed in the experimental focus group compared to the control group (see Figure 11).

The second focus group discussion also contained less conversation on musicality than the control group, but even more focus on others (belonging). There was a focus on the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of other people. The students discussed the value of participating in a group to better understand the perspectives of others while simultaneously creating music together. The students spoke in terms of both musicality and the value of belonging should be combined together into one idea. Several students expounded on this with statements such as, “When others in your group give ideas, it can make both people happy because you helped someone.” Through the use of In Vivo coding, this second experimental focus group discussion conversation translated to the statement: Collaboration with others is used as a means to a successful performance and one’s own musical growth. Teamwork is valuable to help each other, create together, and build upon each other’s skill sets (see Table 6).

Researcher Teacher Field Notes Journal for the Control Group Classroom

On October 14th, the researcher noted, “It is becoming strongly evident that this class is growing stronger in their music skills. I was very impressed with their rhythmic accuracy in this compositional activity.” Again, on December 9th, the researcher observed, “Students are guiding each other musically, keeping the beat in unity and stamina. Finally, on January 3, the researcher observed, “Students were assigned parts and instructed to practice in small groups. I observed

they did this with minimal guidance and the sounds were incredibly musical—even the drums were soft, calm, and attuned to the beat. The music-making process flowed quickly and efficiently.”

Table 6

Diagram of total keywords count within both second student focus groups

| Word | Control | Experimental |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Friend/Friendship (Identity, Belonging) | 3 | 2 |
| Team/Group/Together, Partner (Belonging) | 23 | 23 |
| Help/Helped (Belonging, Agency) | 9 | 12 |
| Pick/Choose (Agency) | 5 | 2 |
| Differences/Opinions (Identity, Belonging) | 0 | 5 |
| Ideas (Agency) | 11 | 12 |
| Listening (Identity, Agency) | 5 | 1 |
| Proud (Identity) | 5 | 5 |
| Making/Doing Music *Musicality, Mindfully Musical | 8 | 2 |
| Instruments *Musicality | 10 | 6 |
| Playing/Performing *Musicality | 9 | 7 |
| Composing/Creating/Writing (Identity) *Musicality | 7 | 5 |
| Combining Parts/Patterns together as a group (Belonging, Agency) *Musicality, Mindfully Musical | 0 | 10 |
| Hard/Challenge (Identity) | 1 | 3 |
| Learn/Learned (Identity) *Musicality, Mindfully Musical | 6 | 5 |
| Think (Identity) * Musicality, Mindfully Musical | 0 | 2 |
| Understand (Identity) * Musicality, Mindfully Musical | 0 | 4 |
| Rhythm/Beat/Counting *Musicality | 8 | 8 |
| Melody/Notes/Letters/Sound/Noise *Musicality | 2 | 8 |
| Grown/Growth (Identity, Agency) *Musicality | 1 | 4 |
| Music *Musicality | 0 | 2 |

Note: Parenthesis indicates SEL domain(s), *asterisk indicates research question application

Researcher teacher field notes journal for the experimental group classroom

On September, the researcher noted, “As both music classes are performing their story/music compositions, I am already observing a more cohesive ‘musical’ and organized group performances within the experimental group. This group also created pictures to accompany their stories—all on their own.

On January 7th, it was noted, “I am observing that students make better choices and work together more unified when they are given instructions and then left to create on their own. They both encouraged and spoke up for themselves while creating ideas together in a safe atmosphere.” Finally, on January 12th, “Each group collaborated and listened to each other’s ideas. One group used rock, paper, and scissors to decide on the xylophone player. One group used paper and pencil to write out their song structure. The boy named B. quietly listened and joined in with the composing and performing process.”

The lesson performance rubrics, focus groups, and researcher teacher field notes demonstrate that SEL does not necessarily enhance the music-making process, but it changes the mindset of the students as they create and perform music together. They view the music-making and performance process as not merely about notes, rhythms, and instrumentation, but it is about the inclusion of valuing each other, the guidance of helping each other through the performance, and respect in listening to the ideas of fellow classmates. The data demonstrate that the experimental group views the music-making and performance process as innately successful when it is a communal activity.

The lesson performance rubrics demonstrated that the experimental group utilized more

time to develop their musicality skills but caught up to the control group by the end of the research period, while the musicality skills of the control group demonstrated a steady progression throughout the study. The lesson performance rubrics show that by the end of the research period, the experimental group received higher lesson performance rubric scores. These rubric results answer research question three; that there was a difference in lesson performance results between the control and experimental groups. The student focus groups demonstrated that although the control group was immersed in musical technique, the experimental group fared comparably and even scored higher in keywords such as *Understand*, *Melody/Notes/Letters/Sound*, *Noise*, *Growth*, and *Music* (see Table 6). Researcher-teacher field notes document that the control group demonstrates strong and continual growth in musicality, while the experimental group demonstrates musicality, along with cohesive, collaborative, and inclusive behaviors. This answers research question three, that there was a difference in musically aware behavior and language between the control and experimental group classes. This evidence answers research question three, that there was a difference in musically aware language between the control and experimental focus groups.

The problem statement: Is an SEL-embedded Orff music approach more impactful than solely an Orff-only approach to music education, was answered through the data analysis of the various qualitative and quantitative tools. The lesson performance rubrics, student surveys, student and parent focus groups, student artifacts, and researcher-teacher field notes all demonstrate in various ways that an SEL-embedded Orff music approach is more impactful for

students than merely an Orff-only approach to music education.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to test the outcome levels of an SEL-embedded Orff approach by comparing a control group classroom using an Orff-only approach with an experimental classroom using an SEL-embedded Orff approach for fourth-grade students.

The literature review presented clear connections between the Orff approach and successful music students. It also presented the value and importance of social emotional learning embedded into a music education curriculum. The data collection analysis demonstrated that an SEL-embedded Orff approach creates more mindfully musical, SEL-aware, and musically aware students.

This mixed methods design presented three questions that focused on the three topics of research. These questions include:

RQ 1: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in mindful musicians between the control and experimental group?

A. Is there a difference between field notes in mindfully musical behavior and language observations?

B. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in mindfully musical language?

RQ 2: In what ways might an SEL-embedded Orff approach create a difference in SEL-aware students between the control and experimental group?

A. Is there a difference between student survey results in SEL-aware student data results?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in SEL-aware language?

C. Is there a difference between parent focus groups in SEL-aware language?

D. Is there a difference between artifacts in SEL-aware student creations?

E. Is there a difference between field notes in SEL-aware behavior and language?

RQ 3: Is there a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental group?

A. Us there a difference between student rubric results in musically aware student performances?

B. Is there a difference between student focus groups in musically aware language?

C. Is there a difference between field notes in musically aware behavior and language observations?

Claims

The data collection tools focused on answering each of these research questions with both qualitative and quantitative data. Through both student and parent focus groups, student lesson performance rubrics, student artifacts, student surveys, and researcher-teacher field notes, data was collected from both the control and experimental group fourth-grade classes during a trimester-long research period.

RQ1

Through parent focus groups and researcher-teacher field notes, research question one findings indicates that the student experimental group shared specific moments of engaging in Mindfully musical experiences. The mindfully musical experience was felt within the room by both the researcher and the students during several of their in class performances. Although students may not verbally express these specific feelings, the statements recorded by the researcher support the students' emotional response from the mindfully musical experience. The parent focus groups also supported these experiences in their verbiage of their child's ability to connect with the music and utilize music to calm their bodies.

The control group data analysis from both the researcher-teacher field notes and parent focus groups demonstrate that the student control group shared specific moments of teamwork and developmental growth in their musical skills. This then produced more confident and

independent musicians. It also demonstrates that the Orff approach is a successful tool for implementing a music education curriculum to fourth-grade students.

RQ2

Through the use of student surveys, student and parent focus groups, researcher-teacher field notes, and student artifacts, it is evident that the student experimental group demonstrated a stronger understanding and application of SEL-aware behavior. The progression of their understanding of its value was demonstrated through their view of collaboration as a means to a successful performance. The parents expressed these same points as they shared their children's ability to work in unity together as evidenced in the Christmas concert. They also used more SEL-specific verbiage in their conversations than the control group parents. The researcher-teacher field notes clearly document social growth from a specific student (student B) as he engaged in the SEL-embedded Orff approach. These notes also document observations of students collaborating and listening to each other as they create and practice their pieces. Lastly, the student artifacts demonstrate colorful, creative, and reflective thoughts on the value of Identity, Belonging, and Agency within the music making process. Overall, the experimental group of students demonstrated a sense of ownership for their individual musical growth through practice and commitment. They valued teamwork as they helped each other, created together, and built upon each other's skill sets.

Lastly, while both the two-way ANOVA and the independent *t*-tests show no significant difference between the control and experimental groups, there are several factors that could have played into these results. As mentioned earlier, because the sample size was only 56, and the achieved power of the study was only 30%, the results indicated that there was a 70% chance to miss significant results in the data. Another notable factor includes student

maturation. Fourth-grade children are growing and maturing at a rapid rate, which could highly influence their understanding of interpersonal skills and thus their survey results reflect that maturation throughout the research process. Further, due to its small scale, the survey is not considered sensitive. A greater number of point options within a scale could possibly have highlighted differences not seen in this smaller four-point survey. Lastly, both the Orff approach and SEL organically share similar components such as collaboration, teamwork, and Brainstorming, thus an Orff approach naturally extends skills that can be considered SEL-typical.

It is important to note that while the survey results demonstrated SEL-aware skill development from both groups, they showed significance in all other measures and in robust ways. Because this research uses a convergent design, it is vital to note that the survey results data point within the triangulated data does not align with the qualitative data for this research question. I recommend further future studies with this same data tool at varying grade levels and longitudinal time periods to determine if these factors may change the data results.

Qualitative data analysis results provide evidence that the student control group demonstrated a shift toward the importance of musical development within group performances. Students placed value on the idea that if they help each other, they can create a strong musical performance. Parents reiterated these views as they discussed pride in their students' participation in the Christmas concert performance. The parents also utilized more instances of musicality specific and less SEL specific verbiage than the experimental group parents focus group (Table 1). Research-teacher field notes document that students show a progressive growth in their musicality skills and teamwork, but there are no observations of stronger developed SEL skills during the research period. The student artifacts demonstrate a level of creativity and collaboration, but the reflection piece is more focused on identity and

musical performance versus the experimental groups/ deviation into SEL verbiage and a focus on Belonging and Agency (Figures 4-9).

RQ3

Research question three utilized performance rubrics, student and parent focus groups, and field notes to demonstrate that the experimental group required more time to develop their musicality skills but caught up to the control group by the end of the research period, while musicality skills of the control group showed slight progression throughout the study. The performance rubrics demonstrate that by the end of the study, the experimental group received higher performance rubric scores (Table 5). The student discussion groups demonstrated that although the control group was immersed in musical technique, the experimental group fared comparably and even scored higher in keywords such as *Understand*, *Melody/Notes/Letters/Sound*, *Noise*, *Growth*, and *Music* (Table 6). Researcher field notes document that the control group demonstrates strong and continual growth in musicality, while the experimental group demonstrates musicality, along with cohesive, collaborative, and inclusive behaviors.

Explanation and Significance of Research Question One

SEL can be broken down into five specific components. Edgar combined the five SEL components into three specific categories (2017; 2021). These categories include Identity (a focus on self), Belonging (a focus on others), and Agency (a focus on decision making). The term *Identity* refers to the development of a student's sense of individuality. Although identity is primarily shaped through the influences of culture, family, and society, socialization within the music classroom plays a key role in influencing and guiding students in their musical identity (Edgar, 2017). The musical experiences within the classroom impact the emotions, thoughts, and

feelings of students, which play a key role in the collaborative interactions of classmates (Edgar, 2021). The term *Belonging* reaches beyond the self-awareness of an individual student and focuses on the unique differences among classmates. Cultural diversity, race, gender identity, personality, and upbringing offer a beautiful and broad spectrum of the student perspective. Edgar states, “As they start to develop their own preference, children also begin to rely on social factors such as group membership in their development of the self and their view of self in relation to their view of others” (Edgar, 2017, p.36). Inclusive classrooms promote and nurture a sense of belonging among students as they learn and grow from each other (Edgar, 2021). Lastly, the term *Agency* focuses on the decision making process within a collaborative music making framework. Within the music classroom, students have the autonomy to make decisions, whether positive or negative. In a positive and inclusive music classroom environment, teachers guide students towards empathetic and collaborative communication within the music making process (Edgar & Morrison, 2020).

Throughout my literature review reading and writing process, I formed the concept of students creating music within a mindfully musical space. This occurs when the five components of SEL and collaborative music making work together within a space of empathy, respect, and positivity; students begin to uphold their understanding of music making and involve both their cognitive and emotional processes in uniformity with each other. This is the point when music making becomes a part of them personally. It is no longer simply an external source of creation, but an artistic extension of their being. This process is achieved when both SEL and the Orff approach of music making are embedded together in a strategic teaching process. To be mindful in music making, students begin to piece together their own philosophy of music making. Students begin to think about their music making experience and become

aware of new perspectives and ways of understanding the music making process (Stauffer, 2005). When students create music in the participatory style of learning, teachers observe . . . flowing expressiveness children manifest when they move does not always translate to playing instruments or singing, particularly when it involves more focused aspects of musical understanding, such as reading. When students are moving, students understand musical ideas instinctively in a way that formal, symbol-based musical ideas cannot convey. (Lawton, 2020, p. 21)

Custodero describes this feeling as immersing oneself so deeply in the musical experience that we forget about ourselves and what we are physically doing and become unified with our music making (2002).

These characteristics were observed most clearly in my researcher-teacher field notes journal. An experimental group entry in my field notes from October 13, 2021 stated, “Students are focusing more on the feelings connected to the instrument sound (how hard, soft, smooth, fast they play) than the rhythm attached to the color/feeling. They are finding more relevance and natural gravitation towards the feeling aspect vs. the musical aspect.” During that same class period, a student stated: “I can make many different sounds with one instrument because that is the power of music.” Later on October 22, 2021, I observed that during a musical performance: “Students were fully engaged, even those students that are often easily distracted.”

The experimental parent focus group also demonstrated a strong pull toward students mindfully musical characteristics. Throughout our discussion, they continually brought up phrases such as *connecting with music*, *balancing emotions*, *excitement*, and *creation*. Parents were both surprised and excited about their children's confidence and musical skill development.

Throughout the second interview, they stated their children have also become more aware of their music tastes and they are singing, practicing, and listening to music more.

It is with these data collection results and a reflective look back at the words of Stauffer (2005), Lawton (2020), and Custodero (2010), that I believe the classroom that received the SEL-embedded Orff approach became more musically mindful throughout this experimental process. Through regular personal reflection (Identity), group collaboration with others (Belonging), and musical creation opportunities (Agency), students developed a sense of connection with their music making, appreciation, and listening. Students moved from an understanding of melodic and rhythmic notes on a page, to an understanding and appreciation for the music they created. They began to view the music as an extension of themselves. It was created by their hands and their minds, thus it is a piece of them that represents their personality, hopes, and dreams.

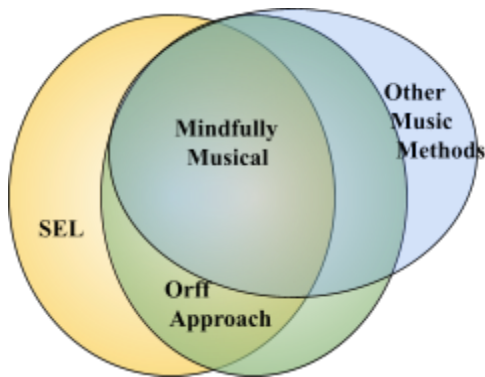
This growth is directly attributed to the uniquely structured lesson plans that SEL-embedded Orff approach into the activities. The collaborative teamwork, class discussions on SEL-related concepts, SEL-focused storybooks, personal and group reflections, and SEL-guided worksheets created the framework for musically mindful students. Because of these SEL-embedded strategies, the experimental group was able to achieve tremendous growth in their development of Identity, Belonging, and Agency. The students demonstrated awareness of the needs of others, of their own voice in the decision making process, as well as the positive and negative choices that their decisions make in a musical performance. Because of these developmental achievements, students were able to create and perform music in a distinctly musically mindful manner, connecting research question one with research question two. The

music became more than just a performance process, but a collaborative and unifying activity that developed into a mindfully musical experience. My literature review discusses Stauffer's (2005) view on this topic when he discusses the importance of students becoming aware of the new way to understand and perceive music through the performance process. My literature review also examines the thoughts of Custodero (2002) as describes the feeling of becoming unified with the music one is making. These are the precise descriptions that outline the experience that takes place when an SEL-embedded Orff approach is applied to the music education classroom. Figure 12 demonstrates that when an SEL-embedded Orff approach is organically united together, the pairing implements a sense of mindfully musical behavior. This is when students move beyond the technical work of the music making process into a collaborative emotional connection with the music and their classmates. Although the research demonstrates that an SEL-embedded Orff approach produces more mindfully musical students, it is possible that other music methodologies could create similar results. Because of this, the mindfully musical addition is built outside of the SEL and Orff approach circles to compensate for other means of reaching this state.

Lastly, the control group demonstrated musical growth during the research process, which is directly related to the Orff approach lessons, while there were no consequential developments to their social emotional learning skills. This distinction is invaluable as it provides a direct connection between the SEL-embedded strategies within the Orff approach and the SEL skills developed within the experimental group of students.

Figure 12

Diagram demonstrating that an SEL-embedded Orff approach interlocks together while simultaneously creating more mindfully musical students.



Explanation and Significance of Research Question Two

As mentioned above, Edgar has broken down the five SEL components into three specific categories (2021): Identity (a focus on self), Belonging (a focus on others), and Agency (a focus on decision making). These three categories were the framework for the organization of each lesson. Each of the three domains was touched on for each Orff-focused lesson and always included an SEL-focused storybook, a discussion, and collaborative student work. The SEL skills were strategically implemented into a small group ensemble piece. The control group experienced the same Orff approach lesson and implemented the same small group ensemble piece, but their lesson did not include any SEL-embedded literature, conversations, reflections, and worksheets.

By the end of my research, the domains of Identity, Belonging, and Agency were glaringly strong within the experimental classroom. Student discussion groups focused their conversations on helping others, making them happy, working as a team, and understanding

others better by listening to them and using their ideas in the music making process. I observed in my journal on December 10, 2021,

Today in music class as the students performed their Jingle Bell Orff ensemble, there was a sense of incredible emotional connection and glue between the ensemble members. It moved from beyond musicality and into a realm of students making choices to hold each other together as they performed. Stronger students were supporting the weaker performers and together they were united in what I can only describe as a cheerleader type pyramid of musical support.

Later, on January 12, 2022, “Each group collaborated and listened to each other’s ideas. One group used rock, paper, and scissors to decide on the xylophone player. One group used paper and pencil to write out their song structure.” Even within the parent discussion groups, the experimental class parents used SEL verbiage eighteen times when describing their children’s behavior, while the control group parents only used these terms seven times to describe their children’s behavior (Table 1).

Socialization is developed through the making of music. Collaborative work creates memberships of connection within performances of musical expression. Russian psychologist Vygotsky believed that social learning was developed in children through interpersonal interactions (Goldstein, 1999), thus, best practice learning occurs when students work together in understanding concepts being taught (Edgar, 2017; Kim & Kemple, 2011). This idea aligns with the SEL component of social awareness (Belonging). Music making is a group experience,

enhancing the development of social awareness. It is also considered a prerequisite for successful musical growth (Kupana, 2015). One experimental group parent observed,

. . . at the Christmas concert, I noticed they were all watching each other during the show and so I asked [son] about that and he said they had this method between the four of them up there that when one of them was offbeat, they would give each other a look, and then they would tap their foot to try to help the other person . . . they used teamwork to get through the performance.

Through my data findings, I believe that an SEL-embedded Orff approach in music education does not necessarily enhance the music-making process, but it changes the mindset of the students as they create and perform music together. They view the music making and performance process as not merely about notes, rhythms, and instrumentation, but about the inclusivity of valuing other people, guiding and helping others through the performance, and respecting others enough to listen to their ideas and implement them into the compositional process. At the completion of the research, the experimental group of students no longer viewed their own opinion as most important, but they would actively seek to build, encourage, and guide others to musical success, while the control group students did not demonstrate these beliefs. Instead, their behavior in the music making process was focused on the contribution of self as an individual over the needs and unified collaboration of the group as a whole. The control group worked hard and achieved excellent Orff focused music goals. Along with the experimental group, their survey results also demonstrated significant development in their SEL skills.

Recent scholarly writings focus on collaboration in music as a conduit for building

friendships, demonstrating empathetic behaviors, and valuing the beliefs and understandings of other cultures (Kim, 2017; Ritblatt, 2013). These attributes follow the SEL components of social awareness and self-management. Goodkin (2001) describes this music making environment as the moments of joining together to unite as something greater. He stated that the Orff approach uses the word ‘harmony’ to represent peace among students as well as the musical concept. These concepts were strongly demonstrated during an analysis of a South African musical piece titled *Sing Noel*. Students discussed ways in which it is important and valuable to study and perform the music of other countries and cultures. Experimental group students shared thoughts such as, “It is good for us to understand the *how* and *why* to music of other cultures.” Another student stated, “It shows us the similarities and differences for our own knowledge and so we can celebrate the music of others.”

While the control group students complimented the music and discussed the unique features of the composition, there was no emphasis on inclusivity, value within cultural differences, and the importance of teamwork to create such a piece. It is my belief that the experimental group was quick to acknowledge these differences because of the SEL-embedded strategies implemented within their music instruction. The experimental group students were keenly aware of the importance, uniqueness, and value of music and cultures that are different from their own.

My literature review demonstrated that although there is much written and researched on SEL and music education, as of this writing, there is currently no material available that specifically embeds SEL into the Orff approach. As literature continues to be examined and organized, common threads that coexist between both SEL and the Orff approach continue to be uncovered. Key research discussed in this literature review have examined scholarly writings

that have included both the Orff approach and SEL. I believe my research clearly demonstrates that an SEL-embedded Orff approach within the music classroom provides students with regular opportunities to grow in their understanding of Identity (self), of Belonging (others), and Agency. Clear and definitive growth occurred within the short trimester of research.

As discussed in my literature review, Edgar & Morrison (2020) believe that in a positive and inclusive music classroom environment, teachers guide students towards empathetic and collaborative communication within the music making process.

Collaboration, an important ingredient in both SEL and Orff strategies, helps children develop bonds with classmates, demonstrate empathy, bounce ideas, and inspire higher-level learning (Kim, 2017). My data analysis contains strong evidence to demonstrate that students developed a strong sense of Identity, Belonging, and Agency within themselves and their classroom. Both the experimental and control group classrooms developed a sense of musicality and an understanding of creating and performing music in both solo and group settings, but the control group lacked the understanding and abilities to create music with a collaborative spirit. They did not demonstrate the ability to make decisions and create with their classmates in a manner that was inclusive, kind, and empathetic. There was a distinct difference between both classes and their musical performances. It was often tangible and dynamically different on so many levels. This includes a difference between the control group focused on self, and the experimental group focused on the needs of others as a collaborative team. This difference is directly connected to the variance in musical instruction between the control and experimental groups.

Explanation and Significance of Research Question Three

The term musically aware refers to the technical development in student musicality. This is where the typical music classroom standards assessment takes place. It is the measuring of student musical development (the process that creates growth). The term focuses solely on a student's understanding of musical skills (rhythm, pitch, ensemble coordination, note reading, etc.).

The student performance rubrics played a significant role in analyzing the musical development of both the experimental and control groups. While the rubrics show that the control group started out ahead of the experimental group, my field note observations record a substantial growth spurt from the experimental group by the end of September, 2021: "As both music classes are performing their story/music compositions, I am already observing a more cohesive "musical" and organized group performances within the experimental group." A parent from the experimental group discussion stated, "I noticed [his confidence] at the Christmas concert, and it blew me away. He is a fairly shy kid and just isn't one that seeks the limelight and so he was super proud that night that he got out there and did it...that was a really cool thing to watch, and to watch his growth in terms of competence." The student discussion group coding analysis also demonstrated musicality keywords with both the experimental and control group students such as: *understand*, *melody/notes/letters/sounds/noise/growth*, and *music* (Table 6).

The Orff-Schulwerk approach is considered a progression of musical experiences in which students guide their learning through creative collaboration in a stress-free environment where fear of failing is extinguished. The process utilizes a specific scaffolding technique that moves from observation to imitation to experimentation, improvisation, literacy, and performance (Long, 2013; Salmon, 2012). Because the Orff approach focuses on reaching the whole child, the benefits are plentiful. Students experience immediate successes as they unlock

their own creativity within the creation process (Calvin-Campbell, 1998; Long, 2013). Feelings of success and achievement boost self-worth, which leads to a stronger sense of goal achievement. Because of this, the Orff approach is often viewed as a psychological method since it is built upon the emotional and mental needs of humanity and not on a specific curriculum or methodology. These successes were regularly viewed in my experimental group classroom as students grew in their understanding of musicality, self-value, and accomplishment. On September 27, 2021, I noted in my field notes:

Within the experimental group, there is a boy named B. He often struggles to stay on task and participate in a collaborative framework. I observed that for the first time, he not only focused, but also collaborated and actively participated with his group. But I did observe that when he was supposed to be filling out his audience observation/feelings sheet during the performance—he struggled to understand the directions and stay on task. The group activities he is beginning to show growth and positive development, but the individual assignments he struggles to understand and keep up with.

Later, on January 7, 2022, while students worked in small groups to compose songs that sounded like the ocean, I noted: “Students are talking through ideas, sharing their thoughts, and verbalizing their opinions They also shared ideas with each other. I heard the following statements:

‘You could do . . .’

‘I think the drums should be softer . . .’

‘How about you play that part while I play this section’ . . . , and the following conversation:

Person 1: Guys, you have to pay attention!

Person 2: But the rhythm is really hard.

Person 3: What if you look at him for help, while you play?

These conversations and observations from the experimental group demonstrate that the students were developing their musical skills within the Orff framework of collaboration, while the SEL-embedded concepts supported and upheld the Orff approach to music education. My research findings clearly demonstrate that both the control and experimental groups developed stronger musical skills. Further, the lesson performance rubrics show that the control group lacked the consistency of continual and progressive musical growth evident within the experimental group (Table 5). My data analysis demonstrates that an SEL-embedded Orff approach supports research question three; there is a difference in musicality skills between the control and experimental groups.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study are numerous and include the triangulation of the data within the mixed methods design. This research style creates a thorough, detailed, and hearty analysis due to its quantitative and qualitative framework and the research utilizes a variety of data points for all three research questions. A further strength includes the compatibility and organic similarities between the philosophy and implementation of SEL and the Orff approach. Both teaching methods focus on the needs of the whole student with a collaborative and teamwork-centered focus (Goodkin, 2001; Kim, 2017; Ritblatt, 2013). Because of these compatible goals, the embedding of these two methods allowed for smooth and cohesive implementation, while still upholding a distinct and separate approach between classes. A further strength of this study includes the researcher as both educator and analyst, who was able to effectively proceed through the process with a trusting and communicative relationship with all

the students. In order to keep the researcher and teacher from possible lesson cross-contamination, the control group class was routinely instructed first and on a separate day from the experimental group. This effectively allowed the researcher-teacher to be able to present the lessons with a clear, focused, and research-minded agenda. The lessons were clearly written as separate entities and always contained in separate folders and files. In an effort to keep all thoughts, ideas, and biases as neutral as possible, the research materials and tools were never combined together. Further, the researcher-teacher has many years of experience with tried and true Orff lesson plans and conducts these lessons with ease and joy.

The limitations of this study include the control and experimental fourth-grade classes as purposeful convenience samples. They were chosen based on the amount of time the researcher would have with each class and because both classes had not yet been exposed to an SEL-embedded approach to Orff prior to this study. Within the discussion groups, students tended to always remember and reflect back on their most recent music activities that were accomplished. As children, they utilize short-term memory usage and this may have had an effect in the ideas and thoughts they presented in the discussion groups. The student perception surveys for the experimental group were conducted at the end of the day leading into a four-day weekend. This may have had an effect on the answers the students gave as their minds were most likely focused on their long weekend plans. A further limitation includes the small range of response options. It is possible that greater response options or a visual analog scale continuum may have been more sensitive and better able to differentiate between the two groups. Further, despite the researcher's commitment to reading over each question, explaining each in detail, and thoughtfully answering any questions related to the surveys, it is possible students may not have always grasped the concepts of the survey questions and correctly applied them to the content

within the classroom. Lastly, although it is also a strength, it can also be considered a limitation that the classroom teacher is also the researcher. There is always the possibility of a hidden bias.

Significance Towards Next Steps

There is a direct relationship between the three research questions and how they collaboratively work together within an SEL-embedded Orff approach. When embedded together, Orff and SEL create a mindfully musical experience for students. They move beyond musicality and the SEL domains of Identity, Belonging, and Agency, to mindfully musical (see Figure 12). Custodero (2002) describes this feeling as immersing oneself so deeply in the musical experience that we forget about ourselves and what we are physically doing and becoming unified with our music making.

The results of my research are profoundly valuable because they demonstrate that an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education guides students towards a greater understanding of Identity, Belonging, and Agency. It allows students to transcend beyond the art of musicianship to a place of making music within a collaborative, positive, and unified position among peers. It provides the framework for a deeper understanding of the value of music making, the commitment, and the teamwork involved in the process. The student benefits are exponential. Figure 12 demonstrates that an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education creates a triangular connection between mindfully musical development, SEL-aware behavior, and mindfully musical development in students. The SEL and Orff approach provides an organic platform for students to develop musically mindful behaviors and experiences while enhancing their SEL skills, and strengthening their own musical abilities as they create and perform music together.

What now? Future steps can include the creation of SEL-embedded Orff lesson plans

for music teachers. The publication of articles, curricula, and books to educate teachers on this vital path for music education, and the implementation of higher education courses to guide pre-service teachers with the tools necessary for an SEL-embedded Orff educational program. Speaking engagements at conferences and conventions can inspire and share current teachers' vital knowledge as they continue their journey in creating stronger lessons for their student populations.

The publication of SEL-embedded Orff instruction within music education publishing companies will provide avenues for spreading this higher level of music education. In his book *How People Learn* (1999), Bransford discusses the value of research within the educational classroom but notes that educators are not quick to implement research due to restricted time and various demands. But he continues on to note the importance of publication for persuasive teacher implementation. He states,

. . . ideas from research are filtered through the development of education materials, through pre-service and in-service teacher and administrator education programs, through public policies at the national, state, and school district level, and through the public's beliefs about learning and teaching, often gleaned from the popular media and from their own experiences in school. (Bransford, 1999, p. 6)

With these thoughts, I present a call to action for further writing and research implementation on this topic. The results of my study demonstrate that when students receive an SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education, they become more musically mindful, more SEL-aware, and more musically aware students. While the control group students lacked a sense of SEL development and mindfully musical growth, they absolutely grew in their musical skills. Their compositions and performances progressed in-depth, with creativity, and accuracy. I

conclude that this development was based on the quality and strength of the Orff approach to music education. When this quality exemplar approach to music education is strategically embedded in an SEL methodology, students reach a heightened sense of development as they learn the value and importance of themselves, their fellow students, and the decision they make in their music performances. These concepts then elevate the unity of their music making abilities and create a sense of musical mindfulness, in which students are united together in the emotion and musical technique of collaborative performance.

Lastly, to continue in this work, further research should be conducted within a larger participant pool, varied grade levels, a more diverse people groups sample, and spanning a full academic year. Compounded together, the data can provide further explanation and guidance for necessary future steps in an SEL-embedded Orff music education.

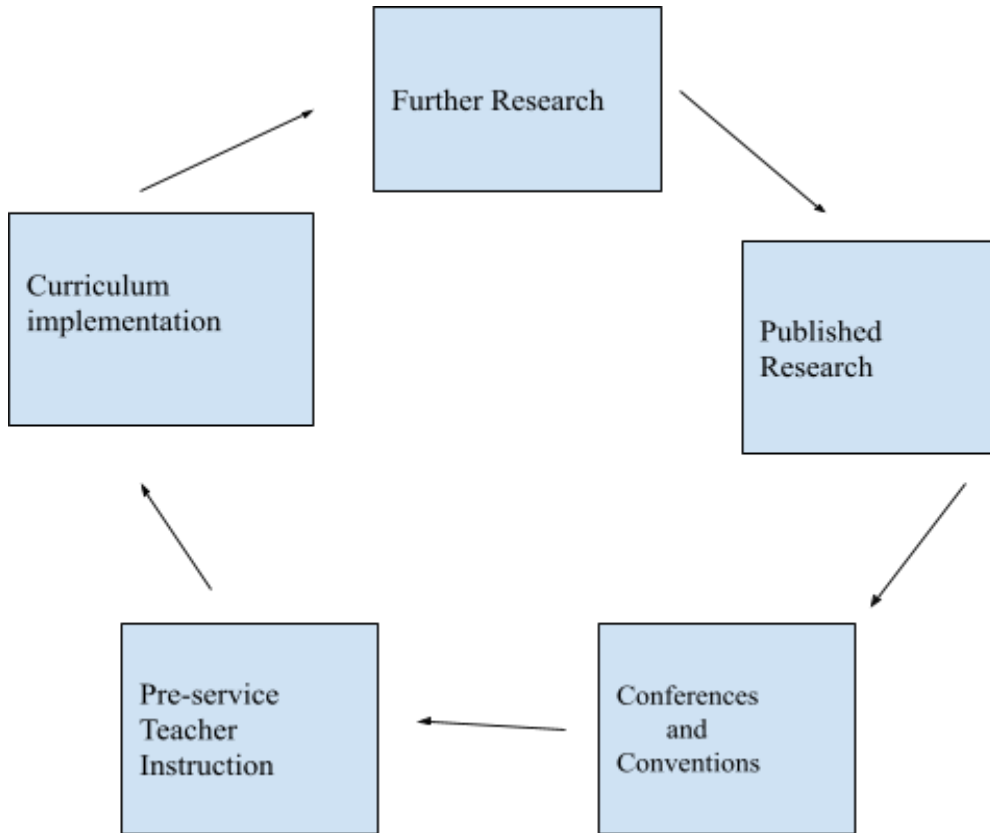
Within my own educational journey, I have always believed that connecting human emotions to music is vital, yet often a missing element in the music education classroom. When I encountered the incredible research and influence of SEL, I was compelled to integrate this into my music education philosophy. My research tells an extraordinary story of how intricately and organically an Orff approach can embed SEL into its core philosophy and yield extraordinary results. I am in awe of the incredible outcomes of this short research period. It was an exhilarating experience to observe as both an invested educator and a curious researcher. I found great joy and delight in my data collection process. I was surprised by how both easily and smoothly SEL-embedded Orff lessons are created and implemented. I was intrigued and encouraged by the unique journey each class traveled throughout this process. As an educator, I am inspired to continue further research on this topic and to also continue my SEL-embedded Orff approach to music education. I firmly believe it is an incredible resource for students and

every child should encounter such an experience within their music education classroom. I found that classroom management, instructional time, and student-led content implementation were both smooth and effective. There was a natural flow to the lesson process. Because of this, I found myself less mentally fatigued after the experimental class left my classroom.

The future of music education can yield an incredible blessing to students across all school settings and cultures. Its results help mold students in both musical skills and social emotional maturity. An SEL-embedded Orff approach clearly provides students with an invaluable tool to promote both higher-level musical training and also a critical piece of emotional and behavioral childhood development. My research and writing clearly demonstrate the value of SEL skills for children into adulthood. SEL skills promote positive, fulfilled, and successful ways of living (Denham, 2016; Domitrovich et al., 2015; Oliver, 2018). When SEL is embedded into an Orff approach, the music education does not only naturally cross with other educational subjects (math, social studies, reading, literature), but it embraces a higher level of learning and thinking through the invaluable skills SEL strategies enforce. I boldly present a call to music philosophers, educators, curriculum writers, researchers, principals, and parents of music students: Please continue down this path, in conversation, research, writing, methodology implementation, and student instruction (Figure 13). Because our children deserve the very best, we cannot stop here. We must continue on this journey to both bless and instruct our future generations with the very best Orff music and SEL instruction for the benefit of themselves and this world that they will someday lead.

Figure 13

Future steps for further development and implementation



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Appendix A: Parent Permission Letter

Dear St. Monica School fourth grade parents:

My name is Tiffany Wilson and this is my third year as music educator at St. Monica School. I am currently enrolled in my second year as a doctoral student through the Alverno college EdD program. I am conducting **a study on music education and social emotional learning**. My study will involve the current Orff method curriculum I use in my classroom teaching, but one of the two fourth grade classes will be receiving a social and emotional learning component embedded into the program. I am asking for permission for your fourth-grade child to voluntarily participate in this research study that will take place between September and December. Before you continue, it is important that you understand the nature of the study and that you are comfortable with your child participating.

1. **Nature of the study:** The purpose of the present study is to examine if an Orff and SEL embedded curriculum will create more musically minded students, more social and emotionally conscious students and more musically conscious students. Students will take a survey twice during the study time frame as well as be recorded during several music classes. Lastly, two focus group discussions will be held during the course of the study. For each focus group discussion, five student names will be drawn from a hat from each class. All visual and audio recordings and surveys will be stored electronically on my personal laptop that requires a password to enter. All electronically stored data will be deleted by October of 2023. Upon immediate upload onto my computer, all paper copies of the survey will be shredded and discarded and disposed of.

2. **Risks or discomforts:** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts involved with this

study.

3. **Benefits:** There are definite benefits for the participants of the study. Students in the experimental class will receive instruction on not only a quality music education, but also a social and emotional curriculum that has proven to benefit students both emotionally and academically during both childhood and as adults. The results of the study will benefit the music education profession by providing more information regarding the positive outcomes of an Orff and social and emotional embedded curriculum.

4. **Confidentiality:** Your child's name or any other information that shows your child's identity will not be recorded. All data collection in this study will be kept anonymous and participants will not be identifiable in any future results.

5. **Questions:** If you have any questions about this study, you may direct all questions to Tiffany Wilson (twilson@stmonica.school) or to the attention of St. Monica School

(414-332-3660). 6. **Voluntary participation:** Your fourth grade child's participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are free to discontinue participation at any time for any reason without penalty and your decision will not have any negative consequences.

7. **Consent statement:** I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to allow my fourth grade student to participate in this study. My completion and return of this survey will be indicative of my consent to participate in this research study.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date:

Appendix B: Student Assent Form

IMPACT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND THE ORFF APPROACH

Assent Form

My name is Mrs. Wilson and I attend Alverno College in Milwaukee. I am working on my doctoral degree in Education. I am inviting you to participate in a research study about the Orff approach and social emotional learning in the music classroom.

Your grownup(s) know about this study, and gave permission for you to be involved. If you agree, I will ask you to participate in music class like normal, but this time you will be asked to take a survey a few times between now and Christmas. You may also have your name drawn out of a hat and then participate in a small group discussion. Sometimes I will be recording our music classes and the group discussions will also be recorded. If your name is drawn for these group discussions, they will last about 30-40 minutes.

You do not have to be in this study. No one will be mad at you if you decide not to do this study. Even if you start the study, you can stop later if you want. You may ask questions about the study at any time.

If you decide to be in the study I will not tell anyone else how you respond or act as part of the study. Even if your parents or teachers ask, I will not tell them about what you say or do in the study.

Signing here means that you have read this form or have had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study.

Name of the Participant (Write your name in the line):

Signature of the Participant (Put your signature in the line):

Date: _____

Appendix C: Student Perception Survey

Student Perception Survey

Component Categories: SELF, OTHERS, DECISIONS (3 questions for each)

Instructions: For questions 1 through 10, please circle the answer that best applies to how you feel. For question 11, please write down any thoughts you have that are not addressed in questions 1 through 10.

1. I feel the things I have learned in music class this year have strengthened my understanding of my feelings (SELF).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

2. I feel I have grown stronger this year in my ability to manage my feelings while I create and perform with my classmates (SELF).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

3. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of my abilities (SELF).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

4. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have improved my ability to work with my classmates in positive ways (OTHERS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

5. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of my classmates and the world (people, cultures, and traditions) around me can be the same or different from me (OTHERS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

6. I feel that as a result of music class this year, I have a greater understanding of the importance of celebrating the things that are the same and different about the world (people, cultures, and traditions) around me (OTHERS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

7. I feel music class this year has helped strengthen my ability to communicate and make positive choices (DECISIONS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

8. I feel music class this year has given me a safe and comfortable place where I can problem-solve while I create and perform music (DECISIONS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

9. I feel music class activities this year have helped me understand that the thoughts I think, the feelings I feel, and the actions that I make are all connected together (DECISIONS).

Not at all **Somewhat** **Most of the time** **Very much**

10. Please tell me about a time in which you:

- A. Communicated and worked with others during a music lesson or performance**
- B. Managed your thoughts and/or emotions during a music lesson or performance**
- C. Was aware that you added something important to a music lesson or performance**

11. Something else you would like to share that is not listed above:

Appendix D: Student Focus Group Discussion Prompts

1. How has the school year been going for you all so far?
2. What have been your favorite parts of music class so far?
3. Tell me how you are a better musician now than you were at the beginning of the year.
4. What are some ways you have grown as a person because of music class?
5. What are some ways you have grown in your understanding of others because of music class?

Appendix E: Parent Focus Group Discussion Prompts

1. Tell me how your child is a better musician now than at the beginning of the year.
2. What are some ways you have seen growth in your child specifically because of music class?
3. What are some ways you have seen growth in your child's understanding of others specifically because of music class?

Appendix F: SEL-Embedded Orff Lesson Plan Database

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Experimental | <i>All Are Welcome Here</i> | How do we show a welcome spirit and kindness to others? What tangible ways can we do this in our school, in our family, in our community? | Xylo and drum ensemble | Who is family | Belonging |
| Control | <i>All Are Welcome Here</i> | What does this mean? | Xylo and drum ensemble | | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|----------------------------|---|--|--|------------|
| Experimental | <i>Your Name is a Song</i> | What is the power behind a name? Why is it important to your personhood and family? | Composition Activity: Small group poem writing on a positive character of each student | Kind attribute attached to each student in class | Identity |
| Control | <i>Your Name is a Song</i> | Rhythmic phrases with student names and body percussion movement | Small group students create body percussion and instrumental ostinato to accompany names of students | | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------|
| Experimental | <i>My Many Colored Days</i> | How do our feelings change how we interact with others? What are the positive choices we can make to help others when they are not having a good day? How can we help ourselves? | Musical Color Wheel: Students create a pie chart of their many feelings and insert a color with each pie section. Composition: In partners, students roll dice and add a pre-determined rhythm to each pie slice. Students then choose instruments to fit the mood of the various feelings and perform rhythms with these instruments. | Diagram of how I can help others and myself during hard days. | Identity/ Agency |
| Control | <i>My Many Colored Days</i> | | Same as above except there is no partner work. | | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|------|--|---|--|------------------|
| Experimental | | <p>Listening: <i>Night on Bald Mountain</i></p> <p>Pre-Listening Discussion: Prediction of emotions in music based on the title</p> <p>Post-Listening Discussion: How did you feel while listening? What emotions, situations, and actions came to your mind? (Share worksheets)</p> <p>What do we do with these emotions? How can we help others that are feeling scared, nervous, anxious, afraid? What are coping strategies when we feel this way?</p> | <p>Composition: In small groups, students create and perform a mood piece with various instruments <u>based on the emotions they felt in the listening activity.</u></p> | <p>Prediction Listening Worksheet:</p> <p>Emotional chart, Prediction of story, Picture of what could be happening in the lesson</p> | Identity, Agency |
| Control | | <p>Listening: <i>Night on Bald Mountain</i></p> <p>Pre-Listening Discussion: Prediction of emotions in music based on the title</p> <p>Post-Listening Discussion: How did you feel while listening? What emotions, situations, and actions came to your mind? (Share worksheets)</p> | <p>Composition: In small groups, students create and perform a mood piece <u>of their choice</u> with various instruments.</p> | <p>Prediction Listening Worksheet:</p> <p>Emotional chart, Prediction of story, Picture of what could be happening in the lesson</p> | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|------|---|--|---|------------------------|
| Experimental | | Discussion Listening activity and discussion: Music of other cultures and its value | <i>Jingle Bells</i> Large group instrument ensemble | Reflection Sheet: Why do I appreciate and value music from other cultures? | Identity, Belonging |
| Control | | | <i>Sing Noel,</i> <i>Sing Noel</i> Large Group instrument ensemble | | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Experimental | <i>The Seashell Song</i> | Discussion: How can instruments create ocean sounds? <u>How can we share ideas and create an ocean song with all the team ideas?</u> | At the Sea Instrumental ensemble | Reflection on <u>Teamwork</u> | Belonging, Agency |
| Control | <i>The Seashell Song</i> | How can musical instruments create ocean sounds? | At the Sea Instrumental ensemble | Reflection on <u>Musicality</u> | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|-------------------|
| Experimental | <i>I live on Main Street</i> | Discussion: What ideas, thoughts, and decisions did you add to create this story? What elements make a good story? How can we use teamwork to create a musical story? | Build a Story Cards/Small group story and song composition Small Groups perform their story and Composition for classmates | Teamwork Assessment: How did we do? Music Assessment: How did our music fit the mood/ characters/and setting of the story? | Belonging, Agency |
| Control | <i>I live on Main Street</i> | | Build a Story Cards/Small group story and song composition Small Groups perform their story and Composition for classmates | Music Assessment: How did our music fit the mood/ characters/and setting of the story? | |

| Class | Book | Discussion/ Activity | Orff Lesson | Worksheet | SEL Domain |
|--------------|------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Experimental | <i>House of Haunts</i> | Leading and following in a small group compositional activity. | Small Groups create a melodic and rhythmic ostinato for their selected Halloween creature from the story Small groups perform for classmates | Who's Leading, Who's Following? (Edgar, 2019) | Belonging, Identity |
| Control | <i>House of Haunts</i> | | Small Groups create a melodic and rhythmic ostinato for their selected Halloween creature from the story Small groups perform for classmates | | |