International
Orff-Schulwerk Forum
Salzburg

Orff-Schulwerk *International*
Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN 2791-4763 (Online)

Voice in the Preparation of the Next Generation of Music Teachers: A Gift, An Opportunity, A Responsibility

Judy Bond and Carla E. Aguilar

Published online: December 2025

Voice in the Preparation of the Next Generation of Music Teachers: A Gift, An Opportunity, A Responsibility

Judy Bond and Carla E. Aguilar

Introduction

The Alliance for Active Music Making[44] (AAMM) is a member of the Associated Schools and Institutions (ASI) of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS). The article which follows is based on the AAMM presentation at the 2025 IOSFS Convention. The session was built around two major strands: 1) the convention theme of Voice and 2) the major goal and purpose of the AAMM: preparation of the next generation of music teachers.

The philosophical underpinnings of teaching about the voice to current pre-service undergraduate music education majors in the United States include two points: (1) All voices are valid in musical practice; and (2) In teacher preparation, we should consider the students in the classroom and their cultural contexts as we teach how to use the voice in musical experience.

Typically, participating in a primary level general music classroom in the United States includes all the students in the school, meaning that participation is compulsory (Abril & Gault, 2006). Therefore, it is critical that pre-service students have experience in teaching music using the voice that honors the different students in the classroom.

Part 1: Basic skills for preparing the next generation of music teachers through active music making with emphasis on voice by Judy Bond

A lesson plan and reflections on a teaching example that may be adapted by music teacher educators for students of any age or ability, as presented by Judy Bond at the 2025 IOSFS Convention.

Background

In the United States, teaching undergraduate students working toward certification as music teachers is the responsibility of college and university faculty who come from a variety of musical backgrounds, including some who are primarily performers with little understanding of the pedagogical practices and techniques that are needed to engage younger students in activities designed for learning musical skills for participation and gaining the knowledge to enjoy the art of music fully. A helpful resource for music teacher educators who lack vocal experience and confidence is “Discover Your Voice: How to Develop Healthy Voice Habits” (Brown, 1996).

The active music making approaches that have inspired the work of the AAMM involve collaboration between music teacher educators and the undergraduate students who will experience pedagogical skills through active music making, as they prepare to assume the opportunities and responsibilities of life as a music teacher. These student teachers come

[44] www.allianceamm.org

with gifts to share, and part of the opportunity and responsibility of the music teacher educator is to discover the gifts of each individual through the process of active music making, including creating, performing, responding, and connecting the many facets found in all music.

Sample lesson process

The lesson plan is generic, with the activities described in the order they were experienced by participants at the Convention. The plan is designed to be adapted for any age or level of readiness, but for this presentation participants were imagined as undergraduate music students studying to become music teachers. The song used for the session at the convention was a round familiar to many music teachers, "Every Morning When I Wake Up". The original pentatonic round was written by beloved and renowned Orff teacher Avon Gillespie (1938-1989). It is familiar to music teachers in the United States and around the world. As with many other compositions that are part of standard repertoire used by teachers grounded in Orff-Schulwerk, both melody and rhythm were freely adapted; therefore the lesson is presented here without notation.

> Objective of the lesson: Develop confidence in understanding and using the voice freely, through exploration of personal vocal sound possibilities.
>
> Other expected outcomes: Explore and experience purposeful expressive movement, through individual, partner, and group movement, purposeful listening, group music making and response.

For this style of teaching, it's important to keep the lesson flowing, reserving analysis, evaluation, and reflection for the final step in the process, remembering that the overall goal is to prepare the next generation of teachers through active music making. In this lesson the music teacher educator models activities with a focus on the voice, but other facets of music pedagogy are present and can be recognized in the reflection which follows the lesson.

- Setting the stage and engaging the students: Ask "Have you ever woken up with a song in your head and your heart? Can you describe your song and how you felt?" Invite students to respond and share your own experience waking up with a song.
- Share the words of Byrd Baylor, "The way to start a day is this: Go outside and face the east and greet the sun with blessing or chant or song you made yourself and keep for early morning" (Baylor, 1977).
- Without pause, go directly to warming up body and voice simultaneously, using large stretchy, circular arm movements with upper body, squats and bends with lower body, while exploring lower and higher vocal range on neutral vowel sounds, gradually evolving into a repeated pattern.
- Use body signals to gradually establish silence, then ask students to listen and echo tonal patterns in major pentatonic.
- Sing a major pentatonic round, with tonal patterns from the warm-up. Using a neutral syllable, start by singing the whole melody in rhythm while showing the melodic direction with hand and arm movement.

- Invite the students to sing along as soon as they are able, using neutral syllables of their choice.
- When most students are able to sing the round and move to show the melodic direction, have them stand and show the form with large circular arm motions. Four phrases: Alternating arms, then a large circle crossing arms and stretching across, up and out, ending with a lift. Try showing the form while audiating the song.
- Continue singing, showing the beat with pat-clap, then walking.
- Add text for the song. (For this session we used "Every morning when I wake up, I have a new song to sing, my children. Every morning when I wake up, I have a new song to sing" (Gillespie, 2003). (The lesson process can be adapted for a round of your choice.)
- Model a traditional or created hand jive pattern you can perform 4 or 8 beats. Have students imitate the pattern in the air while singing or audiating the song.
- With a partner, have the students practice and invite them to create new hand jive patterns to show the beat. Some students may be ready to do this in "double-time", showing the micro-beat (division of the beat).
- Sing the song as a round, creating variations based on the activities experienced in the teaching/learning process. Create a form for the final performance. If the group is large enough, divide into smaller groups and have them perform for each other.

Analysis and reflection

The lesson ended with participants at the Convention singing and moving with an abundance of joy in making music together. A common bond of collaboration, communication, and musical creativity was felt and shared throughout the room. For presentation in an undergraduate classroom setting, the next step would be to engage the students in analysis of the lesson process, step by step, inviting all questions and affirming the musical participation by the students. The music teacher educator leading the discussion would also affirm each question, using the individual comments and questions of the students as a springboard for further discussion.

Due to time constraints, reflection on the lesson was encouraged, through continuing conversations and thinking by individuals. All were invited to share questions and comments with the presenter at any time in the future.

Closing

"Your song will be an offering, and you'll be one more person in one more place and one more time saying hello to the world and the sun. And that's the way to start a day" (Baylor, 1977).

Part 2: Using attentive listening as an approach to hearing different kinds of voices by Carla Aguilar

Teaching general music to undergraduate music education students in the United States typically includes the following mediums: singing, movement, playing instruments, and listening. For this presentation, I focused on listening and singing.

Students at many United States based universities are exposed to singing primarily through a Western Art Music style. Some students experience this through private instruction, and others through performances in choral singing. There are few opportunities for students to be exposed to different kinds of vocal qualities, especially those qualities that they might encounter as they are teaching beginning singing in general music or choral settings.

One aspect of my own teaching philosophy supports cultural pluralism, a term first popularized by sociologist Horace Kallen. This term describes the 'interaction of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious groups in the US. (Harvard, 2025). I promote cultural pluralism because I want to elevate and support differences. Cultural pluralism can include experience and exposure to different styles, genres, and types of music. Cultural pluralism can be extended into musicianship supporting the idea of multiple music literacies. For example, Western Music may support reading and writing notation as one music literacy, and musical engagement from other parts of the world may support different kinds of musical literacy, such as learning and performing music by ear or aurally, without notation.

Here, I want to acknowledge my positionality in teaching. My own lived experience is as a Mexican American music teacher. I grew up in a working-class family in a rural area of Indiana in the United States. Because of the maternal side of my family, I was afforded opportunities available to people who identify as White in North American culture and am predisposed to those ways of knowing and interpreting information. My lived experience differs from both my undergraduate students and the elementary students I prepare them to teach. In my sharing of this teaching process, I aim to be mindful of my positionality and that of the students I am teaching.

I also want to acknowledge the teacher who shared this information with me, Dr. Loneka Wilkinson Battiste. I had the great fortune of hearing Dr. Battiste speak at the Mountain Lake Symposium in Virginia (USA) in May 2025. I will reference one of her recent articles available in the Journal of General Music on the *Black Music Aesthetics in General Music Part I: Exploring Black Musics* (Battiste, 2023).

As a way to support students learning about different vocal qualities, I follow some tenets outlined in *World Music Pedagogy* (WMP) (Campbell, 2003) as an approach to listening, identifying, and describing musical elements from less familiar music. The process of WMP includes developing sound awareness through attentive listening, engaged listening, and enactive listening. As facilitators or students, we want to 'develop sound awareness' (p. 30). Sound awareness includes three features: instruments and voices, elements, contexts. Attentive listening, the first phase of WMP, is 'directed listening that is focused on musical elements and structures and is guided by the use of specified points of focus or diagrams"

(p. 55). Campbell states, "…listening is central to musical understanding' (p. 54). In this spirit, I will offer a way to bring together attentive listening and exploring Black musics.

First, I used the website *Smithsonian Folkways Recordings*[45] as a source to explore the sounds of people and voices from around the world. Before listening, we would read Dr. Battiste's article and talk through, in detail, the different vocal characteristics identified in the article. Then I would present some background information on a particular music that we are going to listen to. Then we would listen to an example and identify some of the different characteristics that we heard. We would take these one at a time and share what we heard, reviewing the different areas and characteristics. We would repeat this process several times as attentive listening expects that listeners will engage in several listenings.

In the article, Battiste (2023) outlines the areas of aesthetic significance for Black music in the United States. She discusses three areas: timbre, mechanics of delivery, and style of delivery. In reading this article and learning from Dr. Battiste, I was drawn to several of the characteristics including heterogenous sound ideal, percussive hand claps, call and response form, polyrhythms, and the connection with dance or movement. I wanted to find an example of Black American Music that embodied some of these different characteristics.

The following is an outline of a process that a facilitator can take to prepare for a listening lesson, as well as to introduce students to unfamiliar music through listening.

Introduce the people and the cultural background of the music. The Gullah Geechee people are descendants of enslaved Africans from the south-eastern coast of the United States. Gullah Geechee is also the name of their language, a 'unique, creole language' formed from many different languages. Together they formed their own community and communication as a way to connect with one another (Gullah Geechee Corridor, 2019),

The music I chose is called a *Ring Shout* (McIntosh County Shouters, n.d.). Ring shouts have origins in Central and West Africa and were brought to the United States by people who were enslaved. Instruments, such as drums, were not allowed on plantations in Coastal Georgia, so the people who were enslaved used hand clapping, feet tapping, and beating the floorboards with a stick to keep time and express rhythm.

In a ring shout, the stick sets the beat and a male performer would begin to sing the first lines of the shout. The women shouters would move in a counterclockwise circle, singing back or shouting responses. These songs were often performed after church and blended African and Christian elements. These shouts were also a form of communication among those who were enslaved.

Review some characteristics of the Black Music Aesthetic and listen to a selection performed by people of that culture. In Dr. Battiste's article (2023), several different characteristics were outlined. As mentioned earlier, in the presentation I focused on heterogenous sound ideal, percussive hand claps, call and response form, polyrhythms, and the connection with dance or movement.

[45] https://folkways.si.edu/

Listen to the selection of music. Listen to a selection performed by a group descended from the Gullah Geechee people called *Jubilee* (McIntosh County Shouters, 1984). While listening to the selection, choose one of the following areas to listen for: (a) heterogenous sound ideal, (b) percussive hand claps, (c) call and response form, (d) polyrhythms, and (e) the connection with dance or movement. Repeat this process several times to listen for each characteristic and to make note of the characteristic. Use a video[46] of a performance of this song to support the connection with dance and movement. This experience is the attentive listening experience of *World Music Pedagogy* (Campbell, 2003).

There are challenges to presenting listening in this way. First, we want to hold the different vocal experiences as unique and valid in their own right. As teachers who are versed in the timbres and concepts of Western music, we tend to make the Western voice a "standard" to compare other music. Guiding students to hold each of the vocal qualities as valid is a continual process.

Another challenge is not to essentialize the musical experience. We may listen to an example of music from one culture or place, and other parts of the culture or place may participate in that music in different ways. We must be cautious not to hold one experience or music as "fact" for all of the different kinds of musical experiences that may take place.

Conclusion

Applying active music making through use of the voice and body, as well as listening to examples of voices supports opportunities to experience using our own voices and learning about the voices of others. The two parts outlined in our presentation and this article support our initial philosophical underpinnings: (1) All voices are valid in musical practice; and (2) In teacher preparation, we should consider the students in the classroom and their cultural contexts as we teach how to use the voice in musical experience.

[46] https://youtu.be/BtYh-L173KU?si=YlfwOxY5VYAP5dgZ (McIntosh County Shouters - "Jubilee" [Behind The Scenes Documentary]

References

Abril, C. R., & Gault, B. M. (2006). The State of Music in the Elementary School: The Principal's Perspective. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *54*(1), 6-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/002242940605400102

About us. (n.d.). Mcintosh County Shouters. Retrieved July 1, 2025 from https://mcintoshcountyshouters.com/about-mcintosh-county-shouters/

Battiste, L. W. (2023). Black Music Aesthetics in General Music Part 1: Exploring Black Musics. *Journal of General Music Education*, *38*(1), 7-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/27527646231217443

Baylor, B. (1977). *The way to start a day*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Brown, O.L. (1996). *Discover your voice: How to develop healthy voice habits*. San Diego: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.

Campbell, P.S. (2003). *Teaching music globally*: *Experiencing music, experiencing culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Gillespie, A. (2003). *Share the music,* Grade 6. New York: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Division.

The Gulla Geechee People. (2019). Gulla Geechee Cultural Corridor. Retrieved September, 20 2025 from https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/the-gullah-geechee/

McIntosh County Shouters. (1984). Jubilee [Song]. On *Slave shout songs from the coast of Georgia* [Album]. Folkways Records.

Smithsonian Folkways. (2017, February 14). McIntosh County Shouters - "Jubilee" [Behind The Scenes Documentary] [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/BtYh-L173KU?si=Iw-yEhw53W-FdMp_

Judy Bond is Retired Professor Emerita, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Past President of the American Orff Schulwerk Association, recipient of AOSA's Distinguished Service Award, and Chair of the Alliance for Active Music Making. Coordinating author of the K-8 series Share the Music, Spotlight On Music, and Music Studio, published by McGraw-Hill. Frequent presenter at international, national, and state music education conferences, and teacher of Orff Levels courses (retired).

Carla E. Aguilar, Ph.D, is a professor and the Coordinator of Music Education at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Her research interests include policy related to music education, access to music education, student-centered learning, and contemporary practices in music education. She has presented research at the International Society of Music Education, National Association for Music Education (USA), and the Society for Music Teacher Education (USA).