

A Survey of Elementary Music Instruction

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ABSTRACT

Given the amount of time and effort spent educating general music teachers, there is an inherent need to determine what effect undergraduate and graduate teacher-education programs as well as certification programs have on actual teaching practice. Additionally, there are few data on elementary music teachers' techniques and approaches. The authors developed an "Elementary General Music Education Survey" for three purposes: (1) to investigate differences in general music teacher's use of four different approaches to general music education (i.e. Dalcroze, Gordon, Kodály, and Orff); (2) to investigate the correlation between teachers' use of each approach to music education and the corresponding emphasis placed on each approach at the undergraduate and graduate levels; and (3) to investigate what effect teacher certification programs had on teachers' use of the respective approaches to music education.

The survey was distributed to elementary general music teachers for use in the present study. Seven hundred and fifty (750) elementary general music teachers were chosen using a stratified random sample by state from the MENC membership roster. The respondents ($n = 222$) reported data on a five-point Likert scale with respect to the four approaches to general music pedagogy.

Using a One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and additional *Post-hoc* analyses using a *Sheffé* Test, the authors found that the Orff and Kodály techniques and activities used by teachers were significantly ($p = 0.001$) favored over the Gordon and Dalcroze approaches. Similarly, the Dalcroze approach was significantly ($p = 0.001$) favored over the Gordon approach. Using a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient, the authors also found that there were weak ($r = 0.41$) and very weak ($r = 0.11$) but positive

correlations found between methods course emphases and teachers' use of techniques and activities at the undergraduate and graduate levels, respectively. Finally, using a series of *t*-tests for independent samples, the authors found that with respect to each of the four approaches, there were significant differences in the techniques and activities used among the certified and uncertified teachers favoring certified teachers in Dalcroze approach ($p = 0.004$), and the Gordon, Kodály, and Orff approaches ($p = 0.001$).

The authors concluded that graduate and undergraduate teacher-education courses have little effect on the type of techniques and activities that elementary general music teachers actually use. The authors also concluded that certification programs specific to general music pedagogies have a significant effect on teachers' use of activities and techniques. While not statistically effective, many teacher-education programs provide students with a survey of widely accepted pedagogies. Perhaps by promoting fewer approaches to elementary music, graduate and undergraduate curricula could have a more focused effect on teachers' actual classroom practice.

In order for universities to produce effective music teachers, college students must be convinced of the efficacy of the methods in which they have been trained. Often in methods courses, pre-service teachers are encouraged to combine elements from various approaches without understanding the underlying philosophy or fundamental principles behind the activities. Instead, the most effective and practical solution may be to facilitate experiences that demonstrate the efficacy of whatever pedagogies are used so that pre-service teachers can make their own informed decisions.