



**Handbook for Orff Schulwerk Teacher
Education Courses
2025**

Carl Orff Canada acknowledges that we live, work, and make music on Indigenous lands. We are committed to actively uncovering and unpacking the truths. We continue to work toward reconciliation by listening, learning, and collaborating with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. We are engaged in developing an understanding of, and respect for the rights, histories, traditions, cultures, musics, languages, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. We are meaningfully, respectfully, and humbly dedicated to Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing and being in the Carl Orff Canada Orff Levels Courses.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a concise compendium of the best practices of Carl Orff Canada Teacher Education courses for participants, Course Directors and Teacher Educators. These practices and requirements are intended to ensure the high quality of these courses. The document is intended to be shared with anyone needing more information about the delivery of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education courses in Canada.

The Carl Orff Canada (COC) Teacher Education program was established to prepare participants to use the materials and procedures that are a part of the Orff Schulwerk instructional model in public and private schools and other educational settings. Teacher Education courses familiarize participants with the approach through active, experiential learning and reflection.

There are three levels to the Carl Orff Canada Teacher Education Curriculum, plus an optional Introductory Level. Each endorsed course must follow the expectations established in the current COC Teacher Education Curriculum. To be recognized by COC as an Orff Specialist, a participant must complete all three levels, and be granted the Specialist certificate by their Level III course provider.

Course providers and Orff chapters offer many other valuable workshops and courses to teachers as ongoing professional development. These courses and workshops do not count towards the Orff Specialist Certificate.

While the policies and recommendations below are adopted as Best Practices for Canadian Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses, it is understood that many individual variant situations may arise that warrant consideration. The Endorsement Committee and the National Board encourage discussion and a flexible problem-solving approach to such situations and will work to arrive at satisfactory arrangements.

This document and others relating to COC Teacher Education are subject to frequent revision to meet the evolving needs of the organization and its teaching goals.

Carl Orff Canada's 5 Core Principles of Keetman/Orff Schulwerk

Every phase of Schulwerk will always provide stimulation for new independent growth; it is never conclusive and settled, but always developing, always growing, always flowing
~ Carl Orff, 1963/2011

As The Schulwerk began to spread outside of Germany, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman's "wildflower" has become inspiration for new interpretations. While the roots remain true to the core principles, in new soil the growth represents the culture where it is transplanted. In its new home it explores and sustains the musics, languages, cultures, and communities of students and beyond.

1. The Schulwerk is holistic music and movement education, engaging learners in a playful and creative manner.

Out of music, movement, out of movement, music. ~ Dorothee Günther, 1976/1978

2. The Schulwerk is focused on creative activities using improvisation and composition. Music making and dance emerge from improvisation through all phases of teaching.

Improvisation is the starting point for elemental music-making. ~Carl Orff, 1976/1978

The primary purpose of music education, as Orff sees it, is the development of a child's creative faculty which manifests itself in the ability to improvise. ~ Arnold Walter, 1992

3. The Schulwerk is collaborative and social. Students engage, interact, and learn from each other. Collaboration is an integral part of a student's development, allowing them to build empathy and appreciation for their peers, enhance interpersonal skills, and develop independence, critical thinking and problem solving.

4. The Schulwerk is a carefully curated process involving play, imitation, exploration, discovery, creating, and reflecting. It is a recursive model; concepts "are developed, recombined, elaborated, and transformed across novel and varied contexts so that learning... becomes more sophisticated, more complex, deeper, and broader with time and new experiences and applications." ~ Kindergarten to Grade 8 Music, Manitoba Curriculum Framework, 2021

5. The Schulwerk is a multi-media approach, starting with the body. The voice, body percussion, movement, and a wide assortment of pitched instruments, including Orff barred instruments, and unpitched instruments are used as "equal, complementary and connected forms of expression." ~ Wolfgang Hartman, 2021

Because the Schulwerk is a holistic, progressive and flexible pedagogy, it has aligned with many current and aspirational educational philosophies throughout its history.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are natural threads that weave throughout and enrich the Schulwerk. Pedagogy is built from and by the community in which it exists, changing as the community changes. Each part of the process and each person that participates is essential to the experience of the whole.

References

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- Orff, C. (2011). Orff past and future (M. Murray, Trans.). In B. Hasselbach (Ed.), *Texts on theory and practice* (pp 134-156). Schott (Original work published 1963)
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Participants

Pre-requisites

For Introduction to Orff:

- None, but some experience performing and reading music is strongly advised. Familiarity with basic music theory is a definite asset.

For Orff Level I (see Appendix 1):

- Background in music theory equivalent to Royal Conservatory of Music Basic Rudiments (Level 5) *and* performance ability on an instrument; OR permission of the Course Director.

For Orff Level II:

- Orff Level I from a COC Endorsed course, meeting expectations* in all strands of the course OR permission of the Course Director.
- One year of implementation of an Orff program as a teacher is strongly advised.

For Orff Level III:

- Orff Level II from a COC Endorsed course, meeting expectations* in all strands of the course OR permission of the Course Director.
- Two years of implementation of an Orff program as a teacher is strongly advised.

For the Orff Specialist Certificate:

- Successful completion of the Level III program, meeting expectations* in all strands of the course.

* “Meeting expectations” is differently interpreted in different courses, but as a general rule, participants should achieve 80% in each strand of the course in order to meet expectations.

Attend Teacher Education Courses in Sequential Order

It is important for the continuity of learning that participants take courses in sequential order: Intro (optional), Levels I, II and III. The skills and understandings from each level build upon each other. Each participant needs to experience the curriculum sequentially in order for mastery to develop. Courses may be repeated at any time, even after completion of Level III.

Attend Only One Intensive (10-day) Levels Course per Calendar Year

The amount of learning and assimilation of knowledge expected during an individual level is extensive. Participants need time to process each of the new skills and concepts that have been taught. Additionally, time is needed for participants to implement their learning with their own students to gain a full understanding of the skills and concepts. It is strongly recommended that participants gain a year of teaching experience in between levels courses.

Exceptions can be made where the course is extended over at least a full term; in such cases, some participants may gain enough experience while taking the course to be ready to take an intensive course during the next summer, or another non-intensive course the next term. Permission can be granted by the Course Director.

Complete All Three Levels within 7 Years

It is strongly recommended that participants attempt to complete teacher education courses within a 7-year span to experience continuity within the program. If an extended time has passed since attending an endorsed course, participants are encouraged to repeat a course. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Course Director, especially where the applicant is actively teaching using the Orff Schulwerk approach.

The Orff Specialist Certificate

The Course Provider will issue an Orff Specialist Certificate to all Level III participants who complete all strands of the course successfully. Intro, Level I and Level II participants are issued a certificate recognizing their progress towards the Orff Specialist Certificate. Templates for these certificates are available in Carl Orff Canada's *Policy and Procedures Manual*.

Course Directors and Providers

Membership

Institutions or COC Chapters applying for endorsement of their Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education courses must be Institutional Members of COC.

Endorsement Application

It is the responsibility of the Course Director to complete applications for endorsement in a timely manner. Contact second-vp@orffcanada.ca for further information about the endorsement process.

Carl Orff Canada Teacher Education Curriculum

Course providers must design their course(s) according to the Carl Orff Canada Teacher Education Curriculum for the current year.

Teacher Educators

The Course Provider and Director are responsible for assembling a qualified Teacher Educator team for each course. Teacher Educators must be current members of COC. Their qualifications are assessed as part of the Endorsement process. Any change in personnel requires a revised or new application to the Endorsement Committee.

Provide Adequate Teaching Facilities and Equipment

Successful courses depend on the availability of adequate space, and equipment, including but not limited to instruments and audio-visual aids. The Course Director should, in consultation with the team of Teacher Educators, develop descriptions of the space and equipment needs for each of the courses being offered. They coordinate arrangements with the site provider, local industry partners or schools (e.g., to lend instruments and provide course books) well in advance. Consider also the practical needs of participants for washrooms, lunchrooms and practice space (where possible).

Supervise Admissions to Orff Levels Courses

Course Directors are responsible for reviewing the qualifications of participants applying to their programs, and especially for checking the prerequisites, results, location, date and endorsement status of courses taken at institutions other than their own. Requests for advance standing are usually not granted. However, while participants cannot be exempted from any level (except Intro), equivalency can be granted for e.g., an endorsed Orff Levels course taken in a different jurisdiction that aligns well with the COC Curriculum. The Course Director reviews the syllabus of the alternate course and seeks additional information about its delivery (e.g., from the Course Provider) before making a decision.

Observe Appropriate Scheduling and Staffing during the Course

One of the strengths of Orff Schulwerk Levels courses is the integration of a range of musical specialties taught by qualified Teacher Educators within an integrated model. In general, each level should remain separate from other levels. Exceptions (e.g., combining all levels occasionally for specific topics) can be made in consultation with the Endorsement Committee through the Endorsement process. It is expected that:

- Each level except Intro must have a minimum of two Teacher Educators.
- Basic Orff Teacher Educators may teach only one level of Basic Orff per course, but may teach one of the other strands in addition to Basic Orff (e.g., the Basic Orff teacher might also cover Recorder for their own class or another level).

Class Schedule

The class schedule has a direct effect on the sense of success participants experience by the end of the course. The Curriculum specifies four strands to the course at each level that are usually delivered in separately scheduled sessions: Basic Orff, Movement, Vocal and Recorder.

- Courses must provide a minimum of 60 contact hours not including lunch and other breaks.
- All courses must meet for a *minimum* of 10 full days. The days do not need to be consecutive; more days can be scheduled if desired, especially for non-intensive courses.
- Basic Orff consists of 30 hours of instruction, usually provided as 3 hours (often in 2 sessions) per day for 10 days. Single sessions should last a minimum of 60 minutes.

- Recorder, Vocal and Movement strands are often scheduled as 10 uninterrupted 60-minute sessions each. Other schedules allowing for more integration of the strands are permitted and encouraged, provided the minimum number of hours for the full course is respected.
- A session of 90 minutes for Movement is recommended but not required.
- Extra time and special topics may be added to the basic program.

The Intro course follows a different model, integrating all strands, with a minimum of 30 hours of instruction. It can be taught by one or more Teacher Educators.

Observe Minimum and Maximum Enrollment Recommendations

It is recommended that the minimum and maximum number of participants required for endorsed Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education courses be:

Intro: 10 - 20

Level I: 10 - 25

Level II: 8 - 15

Level III: 8 - 12

These numbers provide participants an experience more closely resembling typical classroom numbers, allow participants to hear and perform balanced vocal and instrumental ensemble work and create movement in small and larger groups. These recommendations are guidelines that may be set aside in individual situations.

Document Achievement Records

The Course Director is responsible for collecting and reporting marks to participants, and making a permanent record of results following the protocols of their particular institution and privacy regulations. These records must be available for future transcript requests or verification of qualifications from other entities. The Course Director also oversees the prompt issuing of interim certificates for Intro, Level I and II courses, and Specialist Certificates to successful Level III graduates.

The Course Director shall report which courses and levels ran each year and the number of participants in each level to the 2nd Vice President by the end of August annually.

The Course Director also reports the names of Level III Orff Specialist graduates to the COC Endorsement Committee annually, in accordance with FIPA regulations and their institution's privacy rules, usually at the end of August.

Exit Survey

It is recommended that Course Directors conduct an exit survey, inviting participants to comment on the course relevance and quality, instruction, venue, organization and other aspects. The findings of this survey will be valuable for the teaching team and can be used to guide continuous reflection and improvement. A mid-course short check-in survey is recommended but not required. It is understood that institutions providing courses will usually have a feedback protocol in place. Course organizers may wish to incorporate an informal open discussion with teacher educators and participants on the final day of the course as part of this reflective practice.

Communication

Provide a means for participants to be in communication with each other through shared emails (by consent) and/or online discussion platforms. Participants should also have efficient access to teacher educators through email or other means.

Teacher Educators

Qualifications

Teacher Educators for COC Orff Schulwerk Courses are usually informally identified by Course Directors and then recognized as existing or emerging leaders in their field through the Endorsement Application. They are experienced Orff Schulwerk teachers and usually have developed a leadership profile as advocates, workshop clinicians, chapter board members and/or authors. All should be Orff Specialists, but exceptions may be made for the strands other than Basic Orff. Level I and II Basic Orff Teacher Educators must complete an internship which has its own application process. For further information about becoming a COC Teacher Educator, contact local Course Directors or first-vp@orffcanada.ca.

Program Design

Teacher Educators offer a curriculum that aligns with the COC's Teacher Education Curriculum (current or within grandfathered time span) and Orff Schulwerk approach. It is very important that the course content be developed and taught in dialogue with the other Teacher Educators teaching the same level, with the goals of integrating and connecting the content between strands effectively, and not duplicating repertoire between strands (except intentionally to highlight different aspects of the same material).

Ongoing Professional Learning

Continued participation in professional learning in Orff Schulwerk and related studies is strongly encouraged. It is an expectation that Teacher Educators will take advantage of sessions offered through the COC specifically for them, and will actively participate in conferences, workshops, informal learning with colleagues and professional reading.

Appendix 1: Theory Prerequisites for Orff Level I

In order to be successful in Level I, candidates need to be able to:

- read music in the treble clef
- play an instrument with some proficiency
- understand basic music theory:
 - understand simple and compound time signatures
 - be able to notate melodies with correct grouping of notes and rests
 - understand stressed and unstressed beats in simple and compound meters
 - be able to write out scales with or without key signatures up to three sharps and flats
 - identify intervals
 - write out triads
 - identify the key of a melody
 - set up a simple score

This corresponds to RCM Basic Rudiments (Level 5) for those in the Royal Conservatory of Music Examinations system. Course Directors may wish to direct potential participants to online theory programs, theory teachers or to the Introduction to Orff course to upgrade before taking on Level I.

Appendix 2 : Standards for the use of French in the Levels Courses

Because French is one of Canada's official languages, it is expected that some French language repertoire be used in all Carl Orff Canada Orff Schulwerk courses.

There are 3 levels of inclusion of French in current Levels courses:

1. French is the language of instruction – this supports teachers of French in first language programs, and some French Immersion programs.

2. French content (and perhaps musical terminology) is emphasized but French is not the main language of instruction – this supports teachers who work in/support French as a second language programs but do not necessarily have the language skills to teach in French.

3. French content is included as a component of the repertoire, and participants are encouraged to identify and use such repertoire in their assignments – this supports

teachers who wish to recognize Canada's official languages in their teaching but do not privilege French above other diverse content.

· **Guidelines for Implementation**

French language repertoire should come from French traditions in Canada, and from French cultures around the world.

When French is the language of instruction, the teacher educators should speak standard French fluently.

A French as a first language course can be delivered by a non French-speaking teacher educator with the assistance of one or more well qualified translators.

In any setting, particular care should be taken to speak and sing rhymes and songs in French with correct prosody, especially respecting the correct placement of metric accents and anacruses.

Course providers and teacher educators are encouraged to seek support from the French language courses and experts that exist in Carl Orff Canada for help in maintaining these standards.