

Rhythmic Learning to raise school standards – where our story begins

At the outset of the 20th century there were 3 'wise men' of music education, Dalcroze (Swiss), Kodaly (Hungarian) and Orff (German). These exceptional musicians created the gold standard methods of teaching music and movement to young beginners.

A hundred years on, if we want to see improved academic outcomes in our school or nursery, one good option is still to employ a Dalcroze or Kodaly expert for a few hours per week. We can read about such a recipe for success in The Guardian, October 3rd 2017: -

How to improve the school results: not extra maths but music, loads of it

A Bradford primary school wants the world to know its newfound SATS success is down to giving all children up to six hours of music a week. As a bare minimum, each child gets a 30-minute music lesson, a half-hour follow-up lesson, plus a one-hour music assembly with a guest musician and group singing. Songs are incorporated into other classes and pupils often sing about times tables, or history.

The school bases its method on the Kodály approach, which involves teaching children to learn, subconsciously at first, through playing musical games. Children learn rhythm, hand signs and movement, for example, in a way that will help their reading, writing and maths.

Drawbacks – there are a few reasons why you might not opt for this course of action.

- 1) Lack of supply of suitable Kodaly/ Dalcroze experts in your area
- 2) The high cost of such staff
- 3) The fact that their focus is on teaching music, rather than improving literacy and numeracy
- 4) The relatively high time input expected
- 5) The fact that the other school staff may still not be engaged or be able to practise the new methods
- 6) You may feel a single school study is insufficient evidence

To answer No 6 above –

Yes this was only one small sample, but there is much more on similar lines from all around the world. Looking to the USA, there are many centres working on this topic coast to coast from LA to New York. One of the most significant studies was in Illinois, involving almost 600 students. The write up of results by High Scope organisation is no longer available online, but here are 2 points of great significance

- Beat ability was found to be correlated with academic achievement scores in Y1 and 2; with gross motor skills & reading levels in Y1, 3 and 5; with maths and language performance in Year 1.
- Beat ability was more strongly correlated with ability to pay attention than household income or parental education level. Since schools cannot influence parental status or home wealth, the idea that beat ability can be improved by training is persuasive.

At Rhythmic Learning we have proved that input of no more than 3 hours training, spread over 12 short sessions, can make a very significant improvement in beat ability. In the research, training activities were delivered by normal teaching assistants working from printed session plans and accompanying CD of sound tracks. This keeps costs very low and gradually raises skill and confidence levels of staff.

Link to evidence in power point reports, via signing in.

<https://rhythmic-learning.co.uk/>