



# Research on Prosody Activities Teaching in the First Grade of Primary School—Based on Dalcroze Eurhythmics

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**How to cite this paper:** Youling Li, Jun Yin, Xiaona Luo. (2023). Research on Prosody Activities Teaching in the First Grade of Primary School—Based on Dalcroze Eurhythmics. *The Educational Review, USA*, 7(6), 713-717. DOI: 10.26855/er.2023.06.011

**Received:** May 31, 2023

**Accepted:** June 29, 2023

**Published:** July 25, 2023

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## Abstract

Dalcroze Eurhythmics has been described as "a technological revolution in music teaching", because it overturns the previous teaching mode and reconstructs music teaching in the way of body movement. It explores a teaching way that conforms to the characteristics of music art and the law of music learning. On the basis of understanding the law of the teaching method through literature review, this study combines with the music teaching practice in primary school A, to explore the prosody teaching activities suitable for the first grade of primary schools in China. At the same time, this study investigates the application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in primary school A. Combined with three practical teaching cases, the existing problems of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in music teaching activities of the first grade in primary school A are found, and analyzed respectively. Finally, the corresponding suggestions and countermeasures are put forward, aiming at exploring the teaching methods suitable for prosody activities of the first grade in primary school A.

## Keywords

Prosody teaching, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, elementary music lessons, teaching method

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## 1. Research Background

Dalcroze's research shows that the human body is the best instrument, because human beings will express their emotions and the content they want to convey through body movements and body language, and all body movements can be translated into the corresponding form of Musical Instruments. He believed that the great power of musical education could be formed and unleashed by combining the process of listening to music with the response to human movements. At present, many children in China have been exposed to music education in primary school, and many primary schools also provide music teaching for pupils. However, most of these music teaching are simple music appreciation activities in the form of entertainment and games, and there is no standardized music learning for primary school students. Therefore, based on the analysis of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and music teaching in primary schools, this study aims to enable first-grade students to experience music under the guidance of teachers by combining the forms of rhythmic hearing, emotion and soul, and to achieve a scientific music education.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Research on Prosody Teaching

In the research on improving the effectiveness of prosody teaching in primary schools, Guo Yiwen (2022) proposed in his practice of prosody teaching in primary schools that the effectiveness of prosody teaching in primary schools depends on a happy and relaxed classroom atmosphere. In the teaching process, attention should be paid to teaching prosody skills in combination with textbook situations, so as to improve the effectiveness of prosody teaching (Guo Yiwen, 2022). Wang Yanyan (2020) found in the teaching process that prosody teaching can reflect the tone and rhythm of music, and primary school students should be guided to discover and feel the beauty in prosody activities (Wang Yanyan, 2020). He Lijuan (2018) proposed that teachers should adopt Dalcroze Eurhythmics to improve the effectiveness of prosody teaching in primary schools (He Lijuan, 2018).

The above scholars have discussed how to improve the function of prosody teaching and its influence on primary school students to some extent. However, how to play the function of prosody teaching in the first grade of primary school and what influence prosody teaching will have on specific primary school students have not been deeply discussed in the above studies.

### 2.2 Research on Dalcroze's Eurhythmics

In the study of the connotation of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Chen Xu (2016) put forward that Dalcroze's teaching method is one of the most influential music teaching methods in the world today. Its success lies in the fact that it appeals to the training form of auditory, visual, kinesthetic and other senses, which opens a new way to experience music and express music (Chen Xu, 2016). Sun Peng (2019) found that Dalcroze music teaching method mainly focuses on the inner world of young children in terms of educational concept, and pays attention to children's inner experience and feeling of music, as well as their expression. It is open in practice, emphasizes the importance of rhythm training, and shows the advantages of diversified music teaching activities through language expression, body movement training, singing and musical instrument playing (Sun Peng, 2019). In the study of the status quo of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Zhang Ting and Weng Mei (2015) found that the "body movement" of Dalcroze has not been widely popularized at present, and there is a lack of professional teachers who really understand and master the "body movement" of Dalcroze in solfeggio and ear training courses for preschool education (Zhang Ting & Weng Mei, 2015). According to the research of Xu Weiyang (2020), the problems of Dalcroze's teaching method in the application of basic music education in China are mainly the fault between theory and practice, the limitation of teachers' level and the interference of utilitarian education purpose (Xu Weiyang, 2020).

In terms of putting forward relevant suggestions on the existing problems of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Zhang Ting and Weng Mei (2015) suggested that the study of Dalcroze Eurhythmics should be comprehensively planned and deployed, and the training of teachers should be strengthened. Teachers should understand the basic concept of "body movement" of Dalcroze (Zhang Ting & Weng Mei, 2015). Xu Weiyang (2020) also suggested strengthening the training of teachers, improving the music literacy and teaching quality of teachers, strengthening the introduction and practical guidance of Dalcroze Eurhythmics for primary schools, establishing the correct music education concept in primary schools and giving play to the role of primary schools in guiding family education (Xu Weiyang, 2020). Tian Yu (2021) proposed that in carrying out music teaching activities, music teachers in primary schools should master the advantages of music teaching method and design appropriate music teaching activities in combination with the physical and psychological development characteristics of first-grade children (Tian Yu, 2021). Through the review of the previous literature on Dalcroze Eurhythmics, it can be seen that scholars' research focuses include the value, development status and improvement suggestions of Dalcroze Eurhythmics. After sorting out the literature, it is found that the development status and reasons of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in primary schools have become a hot topic for scholars to study, especially the practical application of this subject education in children's teaching. Many researchers have recognized the positive effects of Dalcroze Eurhythmics on first-year students. There are some research results on the educational value and development strategy of Dalcroze Eurhythmics for children, which provides a certain theoretical basis for this study. However, in recent years, the research results of Dalcroze Eurhythmics for first-grade students are few in number, and there are not many representative studies. Secondly, in terms of research methods, descriptive research is the majority, while quantitative analysis and interdisciplinary research are few. Therefore, this study starts from the prosody teaching activities of the first grade of primary school, and through the use of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and field investigation and interview research methods, provides certain suggestions for the current need to choose the prosody teaching methods for the first grade of primary school.

### 3. Analysis of the Teaching Practice and Existing Problems of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the First Grade of Primary School

In order to understand the prosody teaching activities in primary school, the author has had a period of discussion and communication with the music teacher of Primary school A. The teacher decided to apply the Dalcroze Eurhythmics to the music class of grade one in primary school. The following are three teaching cases recorded in the field observation during the three months from September 6, 2022 to December 6, 2022. A brief analysis is made on the teaching practice and a series of problems in the teaching process are proposed.

#### 3.1 Teaching Practice I

Teaching content: *Expression Song*

Teaching process: The primary school teacher first quotes the melody of the first sentence of *Expression Song*, which is the content to be learned in this lesson. As the teacher sings "I'll clap my hands, I'll clap my hands", the teacher leads the first graders to clap their hands. The same can be said of body movements such as pouting, stamping, and laughing loudly while singing.

Teaching analysis: At the beginning of the course, due to the teacher's guidance, the pupils in the class actively follow the teacher to sing and move, such as clapping their hands when they are happy, pouting when they are angry, and stamping their feet when they are anxious. On the whole, the teaching is very effective. Some primary school students can also perform the actions and lyrics they have learned in class when playing with their peers after class. But later, with too much use of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, the class is noisy. The pupils are very loud and their movements are exaggerated. As a result, the teacher has to emphasize classroom discipline and maintain classroom order, which wastes a lot of time and fails to complete teaching objectives as expected.

The problem of the teaching method: It is the abuse of the teaching method throughout the class. Although the use of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the classroom has many benefits, does that mean that it should be used in all music teaching activities? Certainly not. Because each music class has its own teaching activity goal. After the correct positioning of the objectives of teaching activities, each stage of music teaching activities are designed to achieve the objectives of teaching activities. The use of teaching mode is an educational means designed for better realization of teaching objectives. Although the teaching method has the effect of promoting the realization of the goal of teaching activities, it does not mean that Dalcroze Eurhythmics must be applied to the whole teaching process. It is just an educational means designed to achieve the goal of music teaching better and faster. In teaching practice I, due to the excessive application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, the teacher can not reach the expected effect, and does not successfully complete the teaching objectives of the course, and even has to run overtime.

#### 3.2 Teaching Practice II

Teaching content: *Calling*

Teaching process and analysis: The teacher first plays the song, and at the same time makes "phone call", "learn to sing" and other actions. Then the teacher randomly selects two pupils to show on stage. However, due to the psychological and physiological immaturity of the first grade students, the phenomenon of silence and deviation from the teaching plan appeared. In addition, many students deserted because they had no chance to show. The overall curriculum effect is not good.

The problem of the teaching method: There is no specific design to apply the teaching method according to the age characteristics of primary school students. In teaching practice II, the Dalcroze Eurhythmics adopted by the primary school teacher is taught in accordance with the syllabus data issued by the school, which shows that the teacher does not adjust the method according to the specific age of the students. Although this teaching method has been used in the middle and upper grades of primary school, students find it a very interesting, interactive and rhythmic activity to show their own style. However, for first-grade students, they may feel embarrassed to perform on stage because of excessive self-presentation of this rhythmic activity, thus failing to achieve the expected teaching effect. Therefore, when conducting prosody teaching, primary school teachers should design and use Dalcroze's Eurhythmics according to the psychological state and learning characteristics of first-grade students.

#### 3.3 Teaching Practice III

Teaching content: *Fruit Song*

Teaching process: The teacher first asks, "Today, several guests came to our class. Who are they?". Secondly, the teacher says the riddles to let the students guess "The first guest is red and round and smooth. It tastes crisp and sweet.

Who is it?" "The second guest is both a curved moon and a little ship with two pointed ends. Who is it?" Then the teacher shows the pictures of apples, bananas, grapes, watermelons and other fruits (the uncolored side) one by one, and asks the first graders to name the fruit. Then the teacher asks the students to say what color the apple is. If the student is right, the teacher turns the picture over and shows a red apple. In the same way, the teacher asks the first graders to name the colors of other fruits. Also the teacher points out the shape of the fruit, such as the curved banana. After that, the teacher asks the first-grade students to listen to *Fruit Song*. When hearing the word "apple", the teacher presses pause and asks "What fruit is red?" to inspire first graders to say that apples are red. And so it goes with the rest of the fruit. Then, the teacher plays *Fruit Song* again, and asks the students to sing along with the music while making actions.

Teaching analysis: The teacher first uses riddles to let students take the initiative to participate in music learning. The purpose of this design is not only to activate students' thinking, but also to open the prelude to the learning content of this lesson when students solve the mysteries. Then the non-color pictures are introduced. The students are asked to imagine and answer the color and shape of the fruit with the riddle. Finally the teacher plays the music to deepen their memory. The purpose of this design is not only to stimulate students' imagination ability, to meet the desire of students to perform, but also to let students listen to and feel the music.

The problem of the teaching method: Dalcroze Eurhythmics is hardly seen in teaching practice III. Instead, riddles and questions are used to attract the attention of primary school students, thus promoting the orderly progress of the course. It can be found here that the teaching of primary school students can be taught by riddle-style and question-and-answer teaching methods.

#### **4. Suggestions and Strategies**

Through three teaching practices, it is found that there are three problems in the practical application of this method in the prosody teaching of primary school. The solution of these problems is conducive to help primary school teachers choose what kind of prosody teaching activities in the process of music teaching. The specific suggestions and strategies are as follows.

##### **4.1 Use Dalcroze Eurhythmics as needed in class**

The question of how to apply Dalcroze's Eurhythmics teaching method needs to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. There is no way to say for sure whether it is better to use this method two or three times per class or four or five times per class. The setting of various teaching methods and the selection of teaching modes should be made according to the specific educational objects and contents. However, if the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method is easier to help learners understand and grasp the content and requirements than other teaching methods in a certain classroom teaching, then the Dalcroze Eurhythmics should be considered.

Therefore, if the teacher wants to really understand the classroom idea of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, he must apply it comprehensively according to the specific teaching situation. And reasonable use of Dalcroze Eurhythmics is an important step in the successful application of this teaching method. Only scientific design and rational use can achieve the effect of encouraging children's learning, enlivening classroom atmosphere and improving students' quality. Both too much and too little use can backfire and not deliver the desired results.

##### **4.2 Design and Apply Dalcroze Eurhythmics According to the Age Characteristics of Primary School Students**

The application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics should accord with the psychological development characteristics of first-grade students. *The Guide to Learning and Development for Children Aged 6-12* is aimed at children aged 6-7. The goal of this guide is to let children have basic artistic expression and creation skills, which means that one can use body movements such as clapping hands, stepping feet, or objects being struck to strike melody and dance rhythm. Middle and high grade children in primary school are more active. They have a strong sense of self-presentation and are willing to show themselves. But for the children in the first grade of primary school, the music course is more suitable for prosody practice. Also, the prosody exercises should be simple, visual, and rooted in everyday life.

In view of the simplification of students' movements, teachers use the method of feeling and experience to arouse students' enthusiasm for music practice, while diluting professional music-related theories and not talking about professional terms. At this time, the most preferred method for teachers to carry out song teaching is to use Dalcroze Eurhythmics, that is, to guide students to experience the characteristics of song melody with the method of movement. It's fun, lighthearted and easy to accept.

For visualized music animation, teachers should inspire students to think and imitate more when carrying out educa-

tion activities of songs such as animal calls, and guide students to simulate animal calls and jumps to master the rhythm.

### **4.3 Adopt More Riddle-style, Question-asking, Singing & Moving Activities**

From the case of teaching practice I and III, it can be seen that in the reasonable application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in prosody teaching activities, the teaching method of riddling, questioning and the combination of singing and moving is suitable for the first grade students' music learning. Therefore, music teachers in primary schools should apply riddle-style, question-asking and singing & moving teaching methods.

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