

# MUSIC AND MOVEMENT: ENHANCING LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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## **I. Why Should They Move\*?**

- A. Research data support “the realization that steady beat, coordination, and attending abilities (aural and visual processing) enhance students’ reading, language, and math competencies as well as their musical abilities, including being able to sing in tune.”
- B. There are a number of skills associated with rhythmic movement and life-long learning that may not develop in students without our assistance because they are experience-dependent.
  - 1. Aural and visual processing (the attending skills)
  - 2. Kinesthetic awareness (the understanding of what one is doing in movement)
  - 3. Movement awareness of space and time
  - 4. Steady beat competence
  - 5. Beat coordination with sequences, which produce overall coordination of the body and a healthy lifestyle.
- C. Children and adults who succeed in rhythmic movement activities are more likely to join in and enjoy movement and musical activities and sports. They learn to appreciate the flow of spoken and written language, and they have little fear of “looking silly” or of failing to perform adequately in front of others.
- D. Multiple opportunities for successful rhythmic movement should be provided for our students. These types of activities are important for the broad development of children and young people and for the long-term well-being of adults (including senior adults and special-needs populations).
  - 1. Elementary classrooms (change of pace, reward, inside recess, etc.)
  - 2. Music and physical education classes
  - 3. Competitive athletics
  - 4. Exercise and recreation programs
- E. Rhythmic movement describes a variety of activities that can take place in many different learning situations:
  - 1. In music: movement sequences with steady beat and rhythm. (“Rhythmic movement” can replace the word “dance” when working with persons for whom “dance” has negative connotations.)
  - 2. In physical education: movement activities using music, such as gymnastics, figure skating, and synchronized swimming; exercise, sports, and games in which timing are necessary.

\*See *Teaching Movement & Dance, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.* by Phyllis Weikart.

3. In the classroom, rhythmic movement assists with reading, speech flow, writing, and math preparedness.
- F. The data indicate that individuals who cannot walk to an external beat are 85 times more likely than are other individuals to have problems with both visual and aural processing.
- G. Rhythmic movement builds a sense of community, social skills, music concepts, physical education abilities, timing, coordination, and fitness.

## II. Rhythmic Movement

### A. **Movement by Imitation:** "Do what I do."

1. *MOVE IT: SAINT-SAENS "AQUARIUM"* (JOHN FEIERABEND)
2. FREE MOVEMENT IN SPACE
  - a) Walk and Stop (*120 Singing Games*)
  - b) All Round the Brickyard (*120 Singing Games*)

### B. **Movement by Structure and Sequence**

1. SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS.
  - a) The ease with which children, young people, or adults grasp movement activities often depends on the way the activities are presented to them.
  - b) Before initiating movement activities, we should consider whether the activity is developmentally appropriate for the age group being taught by asking ourselves if we have accurately assessed the skill level of the group.
  - c) For structure movement:
    - (1) SEPARATE – use only one mode of presentation at a time:
      - (a) Demonstrate
      - (b) Tell
      - (c) Hands-on
    - (2) SIMPLIFY – begin with what is easy or manageable to learn.
    - (3) FACILITATE – help learners think about and use language to describe their actions
2. STEADY BEAT IS ALWAYS FIRST.
  - a) Steady beat experiences involve movement that is performed in a steady way to a rhyme, chant, or song, or to instrumental music. The goal is for children to feel the organization of steady beat under the words or melody that is spoken or played in rhythm.
  - b) Whatever their ages, beginners need to experience certain basic steady beat activities before they can develop the steady beat independence needed for success with any type of rhythmic movement.
    - (1) Step to his/her own steady beat
    - (2) Move to an externally produced beat
    - (3) Move to steady beat while doing something else
      - (a) Singing while moving
      - (b) Speaking while moving
      - (c) Singing while playing instrument

- c) Research shows that fewer than half of the adults in the US possess steady beat competence. Modern life has required less and less manual work and physical labor; timed experiences (such as pumping water, sharpening knives, hoeing the garden, pumping the sewing machine) are no longer as plentiful as they once were.
  - d) People of all ages can succeed in rhythmic and expressive movement if they experience a sequence of interrelated and increasing complex steady beat activities. **Steady beat is the “glue” or organizer of the rhythm produced by words, melody, or instruments.**
3. FOUR STEP **LEARNER SAY AND DO** PROCESS
- a) **Step 1: SAY**
    - (1) Leader speaks pattern
    - (2) Learner echoes pattern; repeats pattern until memorized
    - (3) Leader can perform movement to accompany verbal pattern
  - b) **Step 2: SAY & DO**
    - (1) Learner performs pattern while leader speaks pattern
    - (2) Learner performs and speaks pattern simultaneously
  - c) **Step 3: WHISPER & DO**
    - (1) Learner performs and whispers pattern
  - d) **Step 4: THINK & DO**
    - (1) Learner performs and thinks pattern
4. RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT LANGUAGE
- a) NON-LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENT (non-weight transfers)
    - (1) TOUCH – foot against the floor
    - (2) HEEL TOE – placing the heel/toe on the floor
    - (3) KICK – knee is straightened
    - (4) LIFT – knee remains bent
    - (5) UP – knee moves straight up in front of the body
    - (6) STAMP – a touch with intensity
  - b) LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENT (weight transfers)
    - (1) FORWARD, BACKWARD – moving one behind the other around the circle or in a line
    - (2) IN, OUT – moving toward and away from the center of the circle
    - (3) SIDE – moving sideward while facing center
    - (4) BACK – crossing behind
    - (5) CROSS – crossing in front
    - (6) CLOSE – stepping next to the foot that has moved side, or in, or forward
    - (7) TURN – turning the body on the step to face a different direction
    - (8) STEP – a transfer of weight in place
    - (9) ACCENT – a step with intensity
5. EXPERIENCE RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT
- a) Steady Beat
    - (1) Touch Your Shoulders (*120 Singing Games*)
    - (2) Engine Number 9 (*120 Singing Games*)
    - (3) Hop Old Squirrel (*120 Singing Games*)
  - b) Singing Games
    - (1) I Let Her Go-Go (*Down in the Valley*)

- (2) John Kanaka (*120 Singing Games*)
- (3) Great Big House in New Orleans (*120 Singing Games*)
- (4) Goin' Down to Cairo (*120 Singing Games*)
- c) American Folk Dance (from New England Dancing Masters or Teaching Movement and Dance)
  - (1) Chimes of Dunkirk
  - (2) Alabama Gal
  - (3) Heel and Toe
  - (4) Blaydon Races (Jig Medley)
  - (5) Galopede
  - (6) Circle Waltz Mixer (In Continental Mood)
  - (7) Lucky Seven (Wizard's Walk/Red Crow Jig)
  - (8) Haste to the Wedding
- d) International Folk Dance (from New England Dancing Masters or Teaching Movement and Dance)
  - (1) Sasha (Russia)
  - (2) Mexican Mixer (Mexico)
  - (3) La Bastringue (Canada)
  - (4) Troika (Russia)

C. **Movement by Expressive Creativity:** Students create their own expressive movement.

1. CRITICAL THINKING (I.E., PROBLEM-SOLVING)
  - a) Body part to be moved
  - b) Type of movement to do
  - c) Where of the movement
  - d) How of the movement
    - (1) Force
    - (2) Time
    - (3) Space
2. MANY REPEATED LISTENINGS
3. INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WORK

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