Dalcroze Eurhythmics
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Philosophy of a Dalcroze-based lesson:

- The human body is the first instrument
- Rhythm bridges what we hear with what we do
- Lessons integrate rhythmic skills with ear-training and improvisation
- Music is abstract—we hear it moving through time
- Movement is concrete—we see it moving through space
- Rhythmic movement manipulates time, space, and energy
- Movement generates feelings, which form emotions
- All lessons develop listening skills, reaction, focus, self-control, coordination, cooperation, self-expression, imagination, and creativity

A Dalcroze-based lesson needs to contain:

- Set-up with quick reaction games and focus activities
- Provide opportunities for the instructor to see ability levels of all
- Allow opportunities for participants to assess their own abilities
- Introduce the theme through movement—ensuring success by all
- Add sequential challenges in the way of games
- Introduce nuances in music to measure participants’ reactions
- Create improvisation opportunities for the participants
- Introduce singing/chanting activities that respond to the music
- Facilitate large and small group cooperative activities
- Provide problem solving and creative development
- Culminate the theme in a Plastique animée, using composed or improvised music

Further reading:


Alliance for Active Music Making: http://www.allianceamm.org/
Sample Dalcroze Lessons

R. J. David Frego (2012)

Warm-up:  A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4  
1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-D  
A-1, B-2, 3-C, 4-D

Go! Stop! Melt! Grow!  
Finding your personal pulse  
Discriminating pulse  
Strategies for movement in the classroom

Discovering Space:
Discovering space in eight beats, four beats, and 16 beats  
Awareness of one’s own space and the space of others  
Locomotor and nonlocomotor realization of space

Pulse & Beat:
Circular clapping and quick reaction games  
Disappearing beat game  
Subtract or add one beat  
Substitute beat with a clap  
Rankin Family: *Fare Thee Well, Love (Tell My Ma)*

Subdivision:  Circular clapping; change size of circle on *hip* or *hop*  
Tapping on a partner’s hand; use vertical space  
*Rock, Paper, Scissors* game  
Walking the subdivisions  
Walking and tapping the subdivisions  
Ennio Morricone: *The Mission (Falls)*

Subdivision Canon:  
Walk the previous pulse  
Move the walking pulse up to the hands  
Move the hand pulse up to the tongue

Canon:  Visual Canon: four beats behind; two beats behind; one beat  
Interrupted canon with partners and ropes  
Interrupted canon individually  
Overlapping canon with partners and individually  
Peter Warlock: *Capreol Suite*

Tension & Relaxation:  
Use a stocking to feel the gradual increase and decrease of tension  
Work with partners and in small groups to feel the group effect of tension  
Ennio Morricone: *The Mission (Gabriel’s Oboe)*
**Solfège:**  Vocal improvisation on a descending natural minor line  
Incorporate the body with the voice  
Try five different ways to sing the line  
Work in ensembles of five  
Move and “catch the wave” with Arvo Pärt’s *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten*

**Mixed Meter:** Thread pull game with partners ||: 5 | 3 | 2 :||  
Longer counts have longer threads  
Add to the meter ||: 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 :||  
Keep the thread at the same length and move with the thread  
Step every beat of the pattern  
Step beat one and clap the complements  
Step beat one and pull the thread from yourself  
Benjamin Britten: *Ceremony of Carols: In Freezing Winter Night*

Change the meter to the following phrase ||: 4 | 6 | 8 :||  
Partners gesture moves to each other; getting progressively larger  
Alternate who begins the phrase  
Create a *plastique animée* with the piece  
Philip Glass: *Songs From the Trilogy (Knee I)*

**Walking Tempi in steps per minute**

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