Kinesthetic Connections in the Elementary Music Classroom, BethAnn Hepburn

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Why movement for students?

1. Movement provides a way for students to demonstrate what they are hearing: Through movement students can show the teacher what they are hearing. Through movement students can express what they are hearing.

2. The kinesthetic memory that comes out of doing movement to music provides students with an experience they can recall when they are making music.

3. Some students may be kinesthetic learners and thus need the movement to learn. All students can benefit by experiencing concepts in the kinesthetic modality which differentiates the learning.

4. Musical concepts, that are aural & abstract for students when first experienced, can be made concrete. Particularly rhythmic awareness is heightened through movement & naturally be experienced through movement for each individual child.

5. Music and movement games also develop concentration and coordination.

Eurhythmics Exercises for Kinesthetic Preparation Example

Come to the Fair!

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PATHWAY TO Rhythm: Prepare and label ♩ ♩ ♩

- Students sit crisscrossed on the floor facing a partner.
- Each person puts their right palm up and their partner places their left hand on top.
- One person taps the steady beat on their partner’s hand. Play 4-beat echo patterns. The other partner echo-taps on the beat-keeping partners upward facing hand.
- Begin with four beat rhythms containing ♩ ♩ and ♩
- Partners trade jobs.
- Help the students’ notice that the rhythm person is always tapping on the beat, but sometimes there are sounds in between the beats. For example, show the following patterns enclosed in heart beats. One student taps the beat and one taps the rhythm. Trade parts.

- Now show the same rhythm with eighth notes written as single eighth notes. Partners echo.
Partners perform all eighth notes:

Repeat the rhythm and ask the steady beat partner if the rhythm partner tapped precisely on every beat? (No. There was no tap at the beginning of beat 2.)

Explain the syncopation by tying the eighth notes together:

Show the rhythm again with quarter note:

Each child keeps a steady beat as you speak the poem. With text on the whiteboard, ask them to identify which words match quarter notes:

Come to the fair! Come to the fair!
Come to the fair this sunny day. (You’ll like it!)
Come to the fair! Come to the fair!
Come to the fair and play!

Each child keeps a steady beat as you speak the poem. Ask them to find the syncopated rhythm.

Students read the rhythm, with syllables, once they have decoded the notation.

Students speak the text as they read the rhythmic notation.
PATHWAY TO Partwork:

- Play an improvised traveling rhythm on a drum. Students step on the beat as they travel and explore the space.
- Ask the students to travel as if they are going to go to the fair. As they travel, prompt them to think of things they may see at a fair, such as a cotton candy stand or the game where you throw a ping pong ball into a tiny fish bowl to win a goldfish.
- On the given rhythmic signal (♩♩♩♩) the students stop traveling and perform a non-locomotor miming gesture of something people do at a fair while you play 16 beats on the rim of the drum. Give a clear signal at the end of the 16 beats to help guide the students feel the phrase.
- Return to a traveling rhythm on the head of the drum; students travel throughout the room until the return of the signal. (♩♩♩♩)
- Students mime a new activity seen at the fair for 16 beats each time you play the signal. (♩♩♩♩)
- Repeat this process several times to allow students the opportunity to explore many gestures, aurally reinforcing ♩♩♩♩.
- Speak the rhyme. Students listen for repeated patterns and form. (a b a c)
- Have a discussion about the repeated patterns (♩♩♩♩) and the form of this rhyme.
- Students speak the rhyme with text, and then with rhythm syllables.
- Model the speech ostinato accompaniment.
- Students join you on the speech ostinato.
- Divide the class in half. Half speaks the rhyme. Half speaks the ostinato. Trade parts.

PATHWAY TO Partwork: Layered ostinati

- Talk about barkers at the fair, whose job it is to use their voices and bodies in interesting, expressive ways to entice people into spending money at their booth, ride, or attraction.
- Model the Ferris wheel ostinato with appropriate gestures and bellowing, expressive long tones. Encourage the students to join you when they are ready.
- Students speak the Ferris wheel ostinato. Model layering the Whack a Mole ostinato in on top of the students’ Ferris wheel ostinato with appropriate gestures.
- Divide the class in half and perform the two ostinati together. Begin with the Ferris wheel ostinato and layer in the Whack a Mole ostinato on top of it. Trade parts. Divide the class into three groups and layer in the three ostinati.
- Transfer each ostinato to UTP, to create a layered UTP ostinati piece.
Lead a discussion about these layered ostinati and help the students realize that the ostinati:
  - are about three different kinds of experiences you can purchase at the fair (rides, games, foods)
  - each move at a different pace (slow, medium, and fast)
  - are three different lengths (16 beats, 8 beats, and 4 beats)

**PATHWAY TO Composition: Layered ostinati**

- Divide the students into small groups.
- Remind them of the attributes of the example’s layered ostinati. (content, pace, length)
- Each group will pick one criteria from each category and compose their own speech ostinato with gestures.
  - Content: rides, games, foods
  - Pace: slow, medium, fast
  - Length: 16 beats, 8 beats, or 4 beats
- Small groups share their ostinato with the class. Class responds with observations. “Which criterion does this ostinato demonstrate?”
- Layer combinations of student created ostinati. This is where your teaching must become improvisatory. Respond to what the students have created and help them explore the possibilities for working with their diverse ostinati.
- Put the layered ostinati together with “Come to the Fair!” to create a final form.
Deta, Deta: Legato

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**Deta, Deta**

*(Moon Rise)*

**PATHWAY TO Creative Movement: Flashlight Follow**

**TEACHER TALK: Glide**

Gliding (light, direct, sustained movement) is an excellent kinesthetic connection to the concepts of phrase length and legato. You can lead the students’ gliding movement utilizing a flashlight and a recording of music with long phrase lengths, such as Debussy’s “Claire de Lune,” or a Japanese Shakuhachi flute recording.

- Begin with the students scattered in **self-space** around the room, facing the same direction (all towards one wall).
- Turn off the lights. Use a flashlight to guide the students’ movement. The students move a specific body part, following the light. Move the light across the wall or ceiling very slowly to ensure the students’ movement is sustained and direct. Coach the students with, “Follow the light with your hand.” or “Follow with your elbow.”
- Lead the class through vertical motions, with the light moving up and down against the wall.
- Lead the class through horizontal movement, with the light moving across the wall.
- Pause at fixed points to create static moments, movements that stop or pause, and emulate the phrases in the song.
- Strive for beauty in movement!
- Have the students feel the phrase length with a sustained motion, while you sing the song.
PATHWAY TO Ensemble: Song with three rhythmic ostinati

- Students read the rhythm of the drum ostinato.
Students perform this **ostinato** with two levels of **BP**, clapping and patting.

Divide the class in half. Half sings the song while the other half performs the **BP ostinato**. Trade parts. For an advanced challenge have the students perform both parts simultaneously.

Transfer to **HD**, with down and up strokes.

Students sing the song again and snap on the rests.

Transfer the snap to triangle or finger cymbals.

Put drums, triangle, and singers together.

Students read the rhythm of the rhythm stick **ostinato**, clapping and saying rhythm syllables.

Transfer to rhythm sticks or other wooden sound and combine with singers.

Divide the class into four equal groups: three instrumental groups and one group of singers.

Put all four parts together. Begin with the drums and layer in the other parts, adding rhythm sticks next, then triangles, and finally, add the singers.

**PATHWAY TO Creative Movement:** *Group shadowing with glide*

Students create group choreography using gliding movements inspired by Japanese characters.

Begin with individual exploration. Students “draw” the images with their arms. Give them time to explore various ways to interpret the written character for firefly. Play appropriate recorded music throughout the exploration.
• Review the concept of mirroring by leading a mirroring exercise with the whole class mirroring you.
• Consider student leaders.

• Lead the class in shadowing. Shadowing is following a leader who is not facing you. Students are scattered in self-space, facing the same direction that you are facing.
• Model how to change body facing. This changes who the class is following.
• The student on the side that you turn toward, is the new leader.
• The students are all now facing a new direction.
• Once the concept has been explored as a group, form smaller groups.
• Place the students in groups of four in a diamond formation.
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- Give each group a different Japanese character to inspire their movement, and a haiku poem to recite before, during, or after their movement. You may wish to collaborate with the classroom teacher and work with haiku poetry that is written by the students.
- Consider adding appropriate props if preparing for a performance, such as Japanese fans, lanterns, flashing lights, or rice paper umbrellas.
- These movement sections can be done as contrasting sections to the song and performed as a Grand Rondo.

Kilkenny Cats: Movement to Demonstrate Form

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The Kilkenny Cats

PATHWAY TO Poetry: Rote teaching and form analysis

- Speak the poem for the students, with the text on the whiteboard for them to follow along.
  
  There once were two cats of Kilkenny.

  Each thought there was one cat too many.

  So they fought and they fit and they scratched and they bit,

  ‘Till excepting their nails and the tips of their tails,

  Instead of two cats there weren’t any.

- Speak the poem, one motive at a time. Do a motivic form analysis together, noting that there are five 4-beat motives: a a b b a
- Teach the poem by rote, through echo imitation.
- Students speak the poem with you.
- Students speak the poem without support.

PATHWAY TO Ensemble: Speech ostinati

- Students read the rhythm for the bottom ostinato.

- Students add text to the bottom ostinato.
- Students perform the bottom **ostinato**. Once the **ostinato** is established, speak the poem on top of it.
- Divide the class in half. Half speaks the bottom **ostinato**. Once it is established, the other half speaks the poem on top of it. Trade parts.
- Students read the rhythm of the top **ostinato**.

- Students add text to the top **ostinato**.

- Divide the class in half. Half speaks the bottom **ostinato**. When this **ostinato** is secure, have the other half add the top **ostinato**. When these two **ostinati** are established, speak the poem over the **ostinati**.
- Divide the class into three groups and perform in three parts. Rotate through the parts so that everyone has a chance to perform each part.
The Kilkenny Cats

There once were two cats of Kilkenny.
Each Cat fight.

Scratch, bite,

thought there was one cat too many.
So they cat fight.

what a nasty fight!

fought and they fit and they scratched and they bit,
Till every

cat fight.

Scratch, bite,

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PATHWAY TO Movement: Choreographing a dance to illustrate the form – a a b b a

- Lead the students in exploring cat shapes that are in high, middle, and low levels.
- Have the students create a pattern consisting of three shapes.

- Students perform their three-shape movement motive on the a motives and travel like a cat (preferably on two legs) during the b motives.
- When the students demonstrate understanding of this basic form, encourage them to make a change for the second b motive. It might be a change of body facing, direction or movement quality.
- Give them time to create a cat dance that pleases them.
- Put the students in pairs. Based on the previous movement exploration, have them choreography a cat fight consisting of a three-shape a motive, a locomotor b motive, with a change for the repeated b motive.
- Students share their dance duets with the class.
- Accompany these dances with the spoken poem or with the UTP ensembles created in the previous pathway.