

# A Study on Strategies for Integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into Elementary Dance Education

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**Abstract:** This study investigates effective methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education, highlighting its necessity in fostering children's holistic development and enriching teaching content. The research proposes strategies such as incorporating Eurhythmics elements into dance choreography and rhythm training, and utilizing game-based teaching to spark student interest and enhance physical coordination and artistic expression. Despite challenges like insufficient teacher expertise and inadequate teaching resources, this paper suggests solutions including strengthening teacher training, optimizing resource allocation, and integrating technology. Future research should focus on long-term impact assessment and refining evaluation systems to promote the standardized development of Eurhythmics in elementary dance education.

**Keyword:** Elementary dance education; Dalcroze Eurhythmics; Teaching methods; Artistic literacy; Innovative practice

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## 1. Introduction

In the current era of comprehensive quality education, elementary school dance education, as a vital component of aesthetic education, bears the significant responsibility of cultivating students' aesthetic concepts, enhancing their artistic literacy, and promoting their holistic physical and mental development. According to the "Art Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education" formulated by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in 2022, dance has been officially incorporated into the curriculum for elementary and secondary school stages<sup>[1]</sup>. However, the current state of elementary school dance education still faces numerous shortcomings, particularly a pressing need for innovation and diversification in teaching methods. The concept of physical rhythm emphasizes perceiving and expressing musical rhythm, melody, and emotion through bodily movements. This idea offers new perspectives and practical pathways for dance education. Its unique teaching philosophy, integrating music and body, can precisely compensate for the current shortcomings of singular models and neglected musical perception, opening new avenues for enhancing students' comprehensive artistic literacy.

Despite the widely recognized importance of elementary school dance education, practical teaching still faces numerous challenges. First, monotony in teaching methods is a widespread issue. Traditional models, primarily relying on teacher demonstration, struggle to fully engage students' initiative and participation, leading to low student interest. Second, some teachers' understanding of dance education is limited to the transmission of movement skills, neglecting the cultivation of students' musical perception and expressive abilities. This, to some extent, restricts the comprehensive development of students' overall qualities. Addressing these issues, it is particularly urgent to explore methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance education.

### **1.1. Research objectives**

This research aims to explore effective methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance education, with the goal of providing more innovative and practical teaching strategies for elementary dance education. Specifically, the study will focus on how to cleverly incorporate the core concepts and movement elements of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into dance instruction. The objective is to promote the comprehensive development of students' physical coordination, sense of rhythm, and expressive abilities. Through a systematic study of the integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and dance teaching, this research hopes to provide actionable teaching plans for elementary dance teachers and simultaneously offer reference points for theoretical research and practical exploration in related fields.

## **2. Theoretical and research foundations of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and elementary dance education**

### **2.1. Theoretical foundations of Dalcroze Eurhythmics**

Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a teaching method that integrates music and bodily movement. Its core lies in perceiving and expressing the rhythm, melody, and emotion of music through physical motion. This concept can be traced back to the Swiss music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, who established the Eurhythmics teaching method in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He aimed to help students more intuitively understand abstract musical elements through bodily movements.

The educational objectives of Eurhythmics are to awaken students' intuitive instincts for rhythm, cultivate their feeling for musical emotion and expression, develop their sense of movement balance, establish regular kinetic nerve habits, and train a rhythmic mind <sup>[2]</sup>. The overarching goal of all Eurhythmics exercises is to enhance concentration <sup>[3]</sup>. This teaching method not only focuses on the perception of musical rhythm but also emphasizes the development of students' understanding of musical structure and their ability to express emotion, making it a crucial component in music education.

Additionally, the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method also emphasizes improvisational creation and personalized expression, encouraging students to freely design bodily movements based on their personal feelings toward music. This teaching model offers new ideas and methods for elementary dance education. It is therefore evident that Dalcroze Eurhythmics is not merely a teaching method, but rather an important pathway for cultivating students' comprehensive artistic literacy.

### **2.2. Current status of research in elementary school dance education**

Elementary school dance education, as a vital component of art education, aims to foster students' physical development, aesthetic abilities, and teamwork skills through dance activities. Relevant research both

domestically and internationally generally indicates that elementary dance instruction should emphasize a combination of fun and diversity to meet the learning needs of students across different age groups. However, current elementary dance education still faces several challenges:

- (1) Monotonous teaching methods
- (2) Neglect of individual student differences
- (3) Lack of cultivation of student creativity

These issues, to some extent limits the effectiveness of dance instruction, and may hinder the cultivation of students' creative thinking and emotional expression, posing a challenge to their holistic development. Therefore, how to optimize elementary school dance teaching methods to better serve the comprehensive development of students has become a significant topic in current educational research.

### **2.3. Research on the integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and elementary dance education**

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance education. Scholars widely agree that Eurhythmics can infuse new vitality into dance instruction and significantly enhance teaching effectiveness. Some studies indicate that through Eurhythmics training, students can more intuitively perceive musical rhythm and translate it into specific dance movements, thereby improving their dance expressiveness and sense of rhythm<sup>[4]</sup>. By emphasizing improvisational creation and personalized expression, it can stimulate students' imagination and creativity, allowing them to gain more enjoyment in their dance learning. However, despite certain theoretical achievements in existing research, how to effectively translate the core principles of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into concrete, actionable plans for elementary dance instruction remains a pressing practical problem, leading to numerous challenges in the integration process.

In summary, existing research predominantly focuses on theoretical discussions, lacking systematic empirical support, especially in the design and implementation of specific teaching methods, which remains insufficient. Secondly, some teachers have a limited understanding and application ability regarding the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method, making it difficult for them to fully utilize its potential in actual instruction. Furthermore, the scarcity of teaching resources also, to some extent, restricts the promotion and application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in elementary school dance education. Based on these points, this paper aims to fill the gaps in existing research by thoroughly investigating specific methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance instruction, and to provide valuable references for elementary school dance teaching practices.

## **3. The necessity and feasibility of integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education**

### **3.1. Analysis of necessity**

#### **3.1.1. Aligns with children's physical and mental development**

Students in the elementary school stage are at a crucial period of physical and mental development. Their thinking is primarily concrete, and their ability to understand abstract concepts is relatively weak. Dalcroze Eurhythmics, as a teaching method that integrates music with bodily movement, effectively caters to children's active and curious nature, thereby promoting their holistic physical and cognitive development. According to the core philosophy of the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method, music learning should not be limited to

auditory perception but should deepen the understanding of musical rhythm, structure, and emotion through physical actions. For example, in elementary dance instruction for younger grades, teachers can guide students to perform simple bodily rhythms in response to music, helping them better perceive musical rhythm and enhance their physical coordination and spatial awareness.

Therefore, integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education is not only a respect for the laws of children's physical and mental development but also an important pathway to achieving highly effective teaching.

### **3.1.2. Enriches dance teaching content and forms**

Traditional elementary school dance education often emphasizes singular action imitation and mechanical repetition. This teaching model can easily lead to students losing interest in learning and can restrict the development of their creativity. In contrast, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, through the organic combination of music and dance, can help students gain a deeper understanding of the emotional content of dance works, thereby enhancing their artistic expressiveness. It's clear then, that the introduction of Dalcroze Eurhythmics can not only enrich the content and forms of elementary dance education, but more importantly, by guiding students to actively explore and internalize music, it can effectively stimulate their learning interest and creativity, truly transforming students from passive imitators into active artistic creators, injecting profound vitality into the dance classroom.

## **3.2. Feasibility analysis**

### **3.2.1. Theoretical support**

From the perspective of educational psychology, integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance education has a solid theoretical and scientific basis.

Firstly, according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage. Their learning process requires sensory experiences and practical activities to support the understanding of abstract concepts. Dalcroze Eurhythmics, by combining musical rhythm with bodily movements, provides students with an intuitive learning method most aligned with their cognitive characteristics, enabling them to grasp complex music and dance knowledge better through practice, rather than solely through abstract explanation.

Secondly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning is a process of social interaction and collaboration. Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching practices are typically conducted in group activities or collective performances, which foster the development of students' cooperative abilities and team spirit.

Furthermore, Dalcroze Eurhythmics also aligns with Bruner's discovery learning theory, which advocates for constructing knowledge systems through independent exploration and practice, thereby enhancing students' learning initiative and creativity.

Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, the integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education not only possesses irrefutable scientific validity, but also, due to its high alignment with core educational psychology theories such as child cognitive development, social interaction, and autonomous exploration, it can effectively promote students' comprehensive development, making its theoretical foundation solid and unique.

### **3.2.2. Practical experiences**

In recent years, many schools both domestically and internationally have actively explored integrating

Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary school dance education, achieving significant results. For instance, an experimental elementary school in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, introduced the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method into its music classrooms. By combining dance rhythms with musical rhythm, they successfully stimulated students' learning interest and significantly enhanced their musical and dance literacy<sup>[4]</sup>. Similarly, the results of an empirical study conducted in 2023 by Md Jais Ismail, Loo Fung Chiat, and Loo Fung Ying at an elementary school in Malaysia demonstrated that the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method had a significant effect on improving musical coordination skills among primary school students<sup>[5]</sup>. These successful cases demonstrate that integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education not only possesses theoretical feasibility but has also been effectively validated in practice. Therefore, based on existing practical experience, the incorporation of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance teaching is highly feasible and warrants further promotion and application.

## **4. Specific methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education**

### **4.1. Integration methods based on teaching content**

#### **4.1.1. Integration into dance choreography**

Dalcroze Eurhythmics, as a teaching approach centered on perceiving and expressing music through the body, can significantly enhance the expressiveness and engagement of elementary school dance choreography through the integration of its movement elements.

In elementary dance education, teachers can combine the basic movements of Dalcroze Eurhythmics such as rhythmic limb swings, dynamic balance, and improvisational movement creation with dance movements to enrich the expressive language of dance. For instance, when teaching ethnic dances, teachers can guide students to simulate the unique rhythm of Tibetan dance through the “trembling knee” movement found in Eurhythmics, making the dance movements more culturally meaningful and artistically captivating.

#### **4.1.2. Rhythm perception training**

Dalcroze believed that “the teaching process of Eurhythmics begins with listening to music or rhythmic sounds. It is based on a synthesis of auditory and muscular sensations, continuously strengthening the intrinsic connection between music, hearing, kinesthetic sense, emotion, and thought”<sup>[6]</sup>.

Therefore, in teaching, instructors should stimulate students' responses by varying the rhythm, tempo, and melody of different musical pieces. This expands the ways different body parts can move, allowing music to penetrate students' inner being and helping them establish a synesthetic connection between sound and bodily rhythm.

By utilizing the Eurhythmics teaching method, we can awaken the body's intrinsic expressive power. As students move with the musical rhythm, dance becomes a medium through which they express their inner thoughts and emotions through physical movement, thereby achieving a high degree of coordination and unity of body, mind, and spirit<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **4.2. Integration methods based on teaching approaches**

#### **4.2.1. Game-based teaching method**

The game-based teaching method is an instructional approach that combines learning with entertainment, demonstrating significant effectiveness when integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics with elementary dance

education. The German philosopher Schiller believed that “Let there be community between formal impulse and material impulse, in other words, a playful impulse. Only the unity of reality and form, contingency with necessity, passivity with freedom, completes the concept of mankind. It has to make this demand because it is reason because by its nature it insists upon perfection and the removal of all barriers; all exclusive activity of one or the other impulse leaves human nature imperfect and creates a limit within it <sup>[9]</sup>.”

Teachers can design game activities that organically combine the movement elements of Dalcroze Eurhythmics with dance teaching content, thereby stimulating students’ learning interest and enthusiasm for participation. For example, when teaching “March of the Toy Soldiers,” teachers can use a “music rhythm game” to have students imitate movements according to the music’s melody and incorporate simple dance movements into the game. This allows students to master dance skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

## **5. Insufficient teacher professional competence**

The integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, an innovative pedagogical approach, necessitates a high level of teacher professional competence. This methodology emphasizes the synthesis of physical movement and musical rhythm to enhance students’ comprehension and expressive capabilities in dance. However, a prevalent challenge is the lack of systematic training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics theory among many educators, which impedes their ability to flexibly implement the method in practical teaching scenarios.

Furthermore, given Dalcroze Eurhythmics’ origins in music education, its effective application in dance instruction demands teachers possess interdisciplinary knowledge integration skills. Currently, there is a relative scarcity of educators within the teaching workforce who exhibit such comprehensive abilities. This deficiency not only constrains the broader adoption of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in elementary school dance education but also risks reducing the teaching method to a mere formality, thereby failing to genuinely stimulate students’ learning interest and potential.

### **5.1. Insufficient teacher professional competence**

Dalcroze Eurhythmics, as an innovative teaching method, demands a high level of teacher professional competence. This approach emphasizes integrating physical movement with musical rhythm to enhance students’ understanding and expressiveness in dance. However, many teachers lack systematic theoretical training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, making it challenging for them to apply the method flexibly in their actual teaching.

Furthermore, because Dalcroze Eurhythmics originated in music education, its effective application in dance instruction requires teachers to possess interdisciplinary knowledge integration skills. Currently, there’s a relative scarcity of educators in the teaching force with such comprehensive abilities. This not only limits the broader adoption of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in elementary school dance education but could also lead to the teaching method becoming a mere formality, failing to truly ignite students’ learning interest and potential.

Simultaneously, constrained by traditional educational philosophies, dance instruction commonly adopts a one-way “demonstration-imitation” teaching model. Teachers tend to focus more on movement standardization rather than fostering students’ individualized expression. Therefore, enhancing teachers’ professional competence is not just a crucial step for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education, but also a vital guarantee for ensuring teaching quality.



## **5.2. Unreasonable allocation of teaching resources**

Beyond the issue of insufficient teacher professional competence, the unreasonable allocation of teaching resources is another significant factor limiting dance instruction. Dalcroze Eurhythmics emphasizes using diverse bodily movements and spatial utilization to enhance students' dance experience. This places high demands on hardware facilities, such as teaching venues and equipment.

Currently, elementary school teaching resources are relatively limited, making it difficult to meet the practical needs of Eurhythmics instruction. For example, many schools have small dance classrooms or even lack necessary audio equipment or multimedia teaching tools. This hinders teachers from effectively assisting Eurhythmics instruction with musical and visual elements.

Furthermore, the uneven distribution of teaching resources exacerbates this problem. In economically developed regions, some schools might possess relatively complete teaching facilities and professional dance teacher teams. In economically underdeveloped regions, however, conducting innovative teaching practices related to Eurhythmics is even less feasible. This imbalance in resource allocation widens the educational gap between urban and rural areas, further impeding the comprehensive promotion of the Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaching method in elementary dance education, making it a pressing issue that needs to be addressed.

## **5.3. Solutions**

### **5.3.1. Enhancing teacher professional competence**

To address the issue of insufficient teacher professional competence, we can enhance educators' abilities in Dalcroze Eurhythmics through systematic training and continuing education programs.

Firstly, educational authorities should organize specialized Dalcroze Eurhythmics training courses. These courses should invite experts and scholars from relevant fields to provide elementary dance teachers with both theoretical guidance and practical demonstrations, helping teachers fully master this teaching tool. Teachers should also be encouraged to participate in domestic and international academic exchange activities, broadening their perspectives and improving their teaching skills by observing excellent teaching cases and sharing practical experiences.

Secondly, schools can regularly host teaching seminars or workshops, providing a platform for teachers to showcase their work and exchange ideas. During these sessions, through methods like collaborative lesson preparation and sharing teaching designs, they can collectively explore the best practices for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics with dance instruction.

Finally, establishing a scientific teacher evaluation system is also a crucial means of enhancing professional competence.

### **5.3.2. Optimizing teaching resource allocation**

To address the issue of unreasonable teaching resource allocation, it's crucial to approach the problem from multiple angles, including policy support, financial investment, and resource integration. These efforts will create favorable conditions for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education.

Firstly, educational authorities should increase their emphasis on music and dance curricula. This involves formulating relevant policies to solidify these subjects' standing within the elementary education system. By increasing dedicated dance class hours and improving teaching facilities, they can provide the necessary material foundation for implementing Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Governments can further support this by providing specialized funding to help schools in economically underdeveloped regions acquire essential teaching equipment, thereby narrowing the urban-rural educational gap.

Secondly, schools should rationally plan and utilize existing teaching resources to maximize their effectiveness. This could involve adjusting classroom layouts or renovating spaces to create temporary dance studios, offering students larger activity areas. Additionally, schools can introduce multimedia technology and virtual reality equipment to allow students to learn dance in a more vivid and engaging environment. Furthermore, resource sharing among schools can compensate for the shortcomings of a single school's limited resources.

## **6. Future development trends of integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education**

### **6.1. Integration with technological advancements**

With the rapid advancement of technology, modern technological tools such as multimedia and virtual reality (VR) are increasingly penetrating the education sector, offering entirely new possibilities for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education. Multimedia technology, by combining visual and auditory elements, can materialize abstract Eurhythmics concepts, helping students more intuitively understand the relationship between dance movements and rhythm.

The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology also brings innovative solutions to Eurhythmics instruction. AI-based motion capture systems can analyze students' Eurhythmics performance in real-time and generate targeted feedback reports, helping students promptly identify and correct deficiencies in their movements. This data-driven teaching approach not only enhances teaching efficiency but also provides students with personalized learning pathways. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to further explore how to balance technological application with actual teaching needs to achieve a deep integration of technology and dance education. This technology-driven personalized learning not only optimizes the teaching process but also provides data support for future quantitative research on the effectiveness of Eurhythmics teaching.

### **6.2. Diversified development directions**

The future development of integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education shows a diversified trend, particularly in its potential for integration with other art forms and the expansion of teaching domains.

As a comprehensive art form, Dalcroze Eurhythmics has the potential for deep integration with various artistic disciplines like music, fine arts, and drama. In the combination of music and dance, Eurhythmics, through rhythm perception training, can help students better understand the emotional connotations of music and translate them into concrete dance movements. When integrated with fine arts, students can use Eurhythmics to express the lines and colors found in paintings, achieving a multi-dimensional perception of art. Furthermore, by drawing upon advanced international teaching philosophies and methods, we can develop a teaching system with unique local characteristics, promoting the internationalization of elementary dance education in China.

In summary, the future development trends of integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education are evident both in the innovative application of technological tools and in its deep integration with other art forms and the expansion of teaching domains. This diversified development direction not only enriches the content and forms of elementary dance education but also provides a broader space for students' comprehensive development. This interdisciplinary integration not only broadens students' artistic horizons but also provides new directions for empirical research on the application of the Eurhythmics teaching method in broader art education fields.



## 7. Conclusion

This study explored methods for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education. Through a comprehensive literature review, theoretical analysis, and practical discussion, it systematically demonstrated the necessity and feasibility of incorporating Eurhythmics into elementary dance instruction.

At the specific methodological level, this research proposed various integration strategies based on both teaching content and teaching approaches. For instance, incorporating Eurhythmics movement elements into dance choreography can enhance the expressiveness and enjoyment of dance. Through rhythm perception training, students can better grasp dance rhythms and improve their performance levels. Concurrently, the application of teaching methods like game-based learning and group collaboration further optimizes the integration of Eurhythmics and dance instruction, enabling students to simultaneously enhance their artistic literacy and teamwork skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

However, the integration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education also faces certain challenges, primarily including issues such as insufficient teacher professional competence and unreasonable allocation of teaching resources. To address these problems, this paper proposes corresponding solutions. The implementation of these strategies will help overcome current teaching bottlenecks and promote the widespread application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in elementary dance education.

Finally, future research is recommended to strengthen the long-term follow-up evaluation of integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education. This will verify its sustained role in promoting students' comprehensive development. Concurrently, establishing a more comprehensive teaching evaluation system will scientifically measure the integrated impact of Eurhythmics on students' physical quality, artistic literacy, and psychological well-being. This will help standardize and systematize research in this field. In summary, this study provides a solid theoretical foundation and practical pathways for integrating Dalcroze Eurhythmics into elementary dance education. Despite persistent challenges, its immense potential in promoting students' comprehensive development and its guiding role for future educational models cannot be overlooked. We call upon more scholars and practitioners to jointly invest in this critical area, hoping to achieve a qualitative leap in elementary dance education through continuous exploration and innovation.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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