Dalcroze Eurhythmics – a Method, an Approach, a Pedagogy, or a Philosophy?

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In my keynote presentation in the second International Conference of Dalcroze Studies in Vienna 2015, I argued that Dalcroze Eurhythmics is not a method. This aroused several opposite opinions and many interesting discussions. In this article, I want to continue the discussion and consider what using the word method implies, and what the other options of talking about Dalcroze Eurhythmics are, based on my previous studies. I will also discuss how a method, an approach, or any similar such system or framework should be applied according to the current understanding of teaching as reflective practice. Moreover, I will address the recent scholarly debate and critique in music education regarding so-called teaching methods, such as Dalcroze.

Dalcroze as a method or an approach

When considering whether Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a method or not, it is important to define what "a method" means. According to Carlos Abril (2016, p. 17), a method can be described as a set of detailed, sequential, and deliberate series of steps that are designed, systematized, recommended, or used to reach specific learning goals. It focuses on what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach it. It can either mean 'a codified system to teaching and learning that has been described in great detail and practiced by many' (like Kodály) or 'the deliberate pattern of behaviors a teacher employs… to guide students from one point to another over the short and long term.' Often a method 'provides a linear framework for teaching and a step-by-step guide along a predictable path to success.'

Jaques-Dalcroze himself used the word 'method' when describing his pedagogical ideas (Jaques-Dalcroze 1906; 1923; 1935) - although he also concurrently denied that his ideas would constitute 'a method'. He felt he was rather 'offering a guide for teachers and students to use as they wished' (Spector, 1990, p. 115), albeit presented within the framework of his main musical and pedagogical principles (Jaques-Dalcroze, 1935). As Jaques-Dalcroze did not provide instructions for teachers as to how to create and present exercises, or how to improvise them, he left the doors open for the development of a variety of ways to teach and apply his ideas (Juntunen, 2002). In fact, he encouraged variety and change through individual decision and creative choice by teachers (Alperson, 1994, pp. 235–236). Accordingly, from this perspective there is no one way to teach or assess learning (Juntunen & Eisenreich, in print). As Sally Stone (1985, p. 9f) notes, there seems to be as many variations in the approach to teaching Dalcroze as there are teachers, and no manual or handbook exists in which one prescribed method is outlined. Each teacher can apply the main Dalcroze principles in one's own personal way. Currently, both the teaching practices and also the areas in which Dalcroze principles are applied are broadly diverse, and include - in addition to the field of music - theater, dance, cinema, somatic education, special education, therapy, and gerontology (Mathieu, 2010).

Still, most Dalcroze teaching practices share several pedagogical principles, such as the belief that students should not be taught rules before they have an experience of them, in accordance with Jaques-Dalcroze's own ideas (Jaques-Dalcroze 1920/1965, 59–60).

There are several other reasons to argue that Dalcroze is not a method. As stated above, a typical characteristic of a method is that it is used to reach specific learning goals. In Dalcroze, learning takes place in interactional processes and through subjective and transformative experiences (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2001). Therefore, the learning outcomes cannot be predicted beforehand. Even when teaching focuses on predefined musical or non-musical topics, and aims at specific learning outcomes, each participant's experience, earlier knowledge, background, and so forth shape and influence learning in unpredictable ways. A teaching method proceeds according to a sequential series of steps, whereas Dalcroze teaching is learner centered and situated; Jaques-Dalcroze (1921/1980, pp. 195–199) argued, for example, that the personal and cultural differences of students should be recognized in teaching and learning, and that education should not predominate over the characteristic qualities of each culture (Jaques-Dalcroze, 1935).

Still, today Dalcroze is often presented as a method (e.g., Comas Rubi et al., 2014; Greenhead, 2016; Southcott, 2004; Wang, 2008), and the word is widely featured in the literature of the field. There are other frequently used definitions as well. For example, the former director of the Institute Jaques-Dalcroze, Marie-Laure Bachmann, prefers terms such as process, experience, or approach over that of a method (Bachmann 1984, 37; 1991, 24). Likewise, in other writings Dalcroze is often referred to as an approach (e.g. Anderson, 2012; Frego et al., 2004; Johnson, 1993; Juntunen, 2016; Odom, 1991; Seitz, 2005).

> An approach implies a broad theoretical and practical framework that 'organizes knowledge, beliefs, values, and experiences for the purpose of guiding practice. Unlike a method, an approach is not defined by a linear explanation or step-by-step guide for what to do, when to do it, and for how long. Instead, it is a philosophical underpinning and/or a theory of some short that can guide and provide a frame of mind for planning and decision making in the classroom.' (Abril, 2016, p. 17)

Cathy Benedict (2016, p. 349) asserts that 'approaches are used to establish a language and grammar as to how we organize our teaching.'

Dalcroze Eurhythmics as a philosophy, a principle, or a vision of embodied music learning

In today's terminology, it could be said that the understanding of the human being that underpins the pedagogical views of Dalcroze Eurhythmics is holistic (Westerlund & Juntunen, 2005); Jaques-Dalcroze stressed that the body and

the mind were inseparable. As Galvao and Kemp (1999, p.133) note, it was the supreme aim of his approach to fuse the thinking person (involving things such as intelligence, imagination, emotion, and soul) with the physical person (body, senses and action) (Jaques-Dalcroze, 1921/1980, p.x; 1930/1985, pp. vii, 108). Jaques-Dalcroze wanted to resolve the imbalance caused by the intellectualization of musical knowledge and the tendency towards abstractions without practical or bodily connections in learning practices. He wanted the whole human organism to be involved in musical activity. Hence, the basic cornerstone of the Dalcroze approach can be seen as an early critique of the Cartesian tradition within music education (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2011). The Cartesian view includes the dualistic conception of the subject that separates the mind from the body, and understands knowing as being predominantly gained through the visual sense and intellectual thinking, instead of through hearing, feeling, touching, or doing. Jaques-Dalcroze's pedagogical reflection therefore concentrated on searching for ways to combine thinking, sensing, feeling, and bodily action by linking listening and body movement, by making students both bodily and mentally active, and by making his students experience things for themselves (Juntunen 2004; Westerlund & Juntunen, 2005). From this perspective, Dalcroze Eurhythmics can be viewed more as a music education philosophy, philosophic principle, or a philosophical-practical vision than a method.

In my studies, I have approached Dalcroze Eurhythmics from the perspective of the phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Juntunen, 2004; 2016). The phenomenological notion of human reality arises from a criticism of the dualistic conception of the subject. Phenomenologists, such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, argue that the division is in fact an artificial creation of philosophical reflection rather than something based on reality. At the core of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is the argument that perception and lived experiences play a foundational role in understanding the world. For him, the human body is the primary site of knowing the world. It is not a machine guided by the mind, but an active sensitive entity, oriented towards perceiving and experiencing potential meaning in its world. The body is in a permanent *condition of experience*, and the primacy of perception signifies the primacy of experience.

In my understanding, Jaques-Dalcroze's philosophic-practical vision is in line with Merleau-Ponty's philosophical arguments. Merleau-Ponty (1962) seems to have struggled with the same challenges in a theoretical way within philosophy that Jaques-Dalcroze did in a practical way within music education. Merleau-Ponty's work can be interpreted as an effort to unify the world and our experience of it, and to turn our attention to the importance of embodied, pre-reflective experience. Jaques-Dalcroze identifies the disembodied nature of musical experience and looks for ways to promote embodied musical learning aiming to resolve the imbalance caused by the intellectualization of musical knowledge. Jaques-Dalcroze suggested an

idea that the body is not only an instrument through which musical thinking takes place, but can also be taken as a conscious and explicit object of transformation, and therefore of better musicianship – a view that seems to have been in many ways ahead of his time (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2001).

For me, Dalcroze pedagogy's most valuable aim was to highlight the embodiment of the human being and the embodied ways of learning within music education (Juntunen, 2004). As Odom (1991, p. 10) puts it: 'He initiated a way of teaching based on direct experience, which took the nonverbal, intuitive knowledge of the body seriously.' In its historical context, it can even be read as an early, almost postmodern attempt to break the rise of the modern, rationalistic conception of the human self in music and music education - or as a *counternarrative* (Peters & Lankshear, 1995) in its working against the disembodied epistemology that emphasizes reading skills as well as a rational and distanced analytical approach to music (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2011). As a counternarrative of its own time, Jaques-Dalcroze offered transformative ideas, which rejected technical conceptions of teaching and learning and challenged educators to seek out the students' lived, embodied experiences.

Dalcroze as a pedagogy that applies body movement in music teaching and learning

Dalcroze Eurhythmics not only focuses attention on and promotes the understanding of embodiment in music education, but it also offers pedagogical solutions and exercises to promote embodied musical learning, for example through the use of body movement. Therefore, Dalcroze can be regarded as a pedagogy. In Dalcroze pedagogy, incorporating meaningful body movement experience into the music learning processes is regarded as facilitating and reinforcing musical perception, understanding, expression, and a sense of self, as well as developing bodily and social skills and fostering awareness of the physical dimensions and demands of an artistic performance (Juntunen, 2016). One interpretation of the role of body movement is that it develops above all a bodily knowing of music; that is, a non-linguistic and non-propositional mode of cognition that forms the basis for all knowing, without which conceptual knowing remains mechanical and thin (Juntunen & Hyvönen, 2004).

The belief in the close relationship between music and human-body movement persists, and continues to be noted by scholars. Currently, there is a considerable and growing body of research that examines the role of body movement in music education, in support of Jaques-Dalcroze's ideas. A great deal of recent arguments, not only from music education but also, for example, from cognitive and neurosciences, support the close connection between music, body, and movement - and thus also support the pedagogical ideas of applying body movement to music teaching and learning (Juntunen, 2016).

The current critique towards *methods*

Over the past decades, established music teaching methods have been critiqued and new discourses promoting musical pluralism and authentic learning environments have been offered in return. In the current discussions within music education, some scholars are questioning the role and relevance of so-called music education methods, such as Kodály, Orff, and Dalcroze. In these critiques, sequential and systematic methods are seen as predetermining not only teaching but also learning, which should be situated, creative, and practice-based (Bowman, 2002). For instance, Thomas Regelski (2002) has argued that with prescribed methods, there is a danger of ending up teaching the method instead of music – the tools themselves become the curriculum. He maintains (Regelski 2005) that the methods 'take for granted that they automatically bring about good results' … and, 'in any case, results are not even noted because full faith is placed in good methods.' According to Regelski (2002), the uncritical acceptance of a method ensues the blind faith that 'technical skill alone produces taken-for-granted ends.' When this occurs, he continues, 'good teaching is simply a matter of the standard use of a 'good method' that lacks personal and ethical responsibility for reflective professional practice. John Dewey (1938, p. 22) also warned educationalists that '… an educational philosophy … can become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which is reacted against. For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based on upon critical examination of its own underlying principles.'

Method as stories suggesting an ideal path for musical growth

Indeed, purely following a method uncritically, without applying pedagogical wisdom, can imply such threats. Although teaching methods as such can be problematic in current music education, various methods or pedagogical approaches can, however, be viewed differently. For example, teaching methods can be approached as stories that legitimize a particular version of 'educational truths' and ends, as suggested in my study with Heidi Westerlund (Juntunen & Westerlund 2011). These stories suggest, implicitly or explicitly, 'an ideal story of success' and a direction of growth for the music-learner self. Through rereading and gaining an understanding of a method, and what specific problems related to musical growth it identifies and aims to solve, we can test its power. Jaques-Dalcroze identified music students' poor musical expression as one of these major problems. As a partial solution to this, he developed exercises that offered holistic bodily experiences of music.

In our article (Juntunen & Westerlund 2011), we analyze Jaques-Dalcroze's texts as articulating ideals of how human competencies are developed through music and within music education. Furthermore, we suggest that methods as

stories can be used in today's teacher education in order to develop teachers' cultural metacognition and lead future teachers towards reflective practices. Methods may function 'as heterogeneous and rich intellectual material for cultural consciousness, constant critical discussion, practical testing of ideas, and, above all, for future teachers' learning' (ibid., p. 56). As Abril and Gault (2016, p. 2) note: 'Knowledge of pedagogical practices and approaches is extremely valuable to teachers, insofar as they are examined with thought, intent, and a reflective frame of mind.'

The critique towards methods undermines the fundamental fact that teachers always have working methods, and that our current methods also suggest larger philosophical and educational frames of reference for the teacher's conscious practical decisions (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2011). Similarly, any music education approach alludes to something in the culture of education: it singles out a perspective and points out a possible problem that is meant to be avoided through the systematic use of the given method. Thus, a method is not transparent or irrelevant in learning, but is rather developed within the experience itself. A relevant critique should therefore not be concerned simply with the predefined nature of music education practices, but also with their possibly limited nature when their biases are unreflectively taken for granted, celebrated, and carried out.

This is where engaging in reflection, which has become a commonly recognized element in the professional growth of Western teachers and teaching practices, shows its relevance. Reflection aims at encouraging teachers to take responsibility for their own professional growth and actions, and at making it easier for them to develop their own theories of educational practice, so that they can take a more active role in educational decision-making (Calderhead & Gates, 1995, p. 2). Or, as Loughran writes: "Reflection is effective when it leads the teacher to make meaning from the situation in ways that enhance understanding so that she or he becomes to see and understand the practice setting from a variety of viewpoints" (2002, p. 36).

Reflection, however, often looks like the reflector. Teacher reflection can aim at strengthening earlier habits, at becoming explicit regarding one's already established personal story of good teaching. Hence, the challenge in reflection is to give up the belief in and the search for absolutely right viewpoints, and the unreflective reliance on custom, convention, and tradition. Instead, reflection encourages constantly responding to new situations and changing conditions (Westerlund & Juntunen, 2011). In (Dalcroze) teacher education, reflective practice is related to the recognition of power, and thus to the ethical responsibility of individual teachers. Teachers also need after-the-fact 'reflection-on-action' (Schön, 1987) within a wider critical and socio-cultural frame of reference, which asserts itself in reflecting on the reasons behind actions, assumptions, values, and the culture of education: i.e., the ethics of teaching (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2011). The meta-narratives of music education methods can function as frames of

reference for this kind of reflection. In order to reflect on Dalcroze pedagogy and music education in general from a wider perspective, one therefore needs to grow into adopting a critical stance towards one's own work - into challenging one's own fundamental beliefs and practices concerning music education (Westerlund & Juntunen, 2011).

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that, rather than a systematic method setting the order of and rules for sequenced teaching phases with predetermined ends, Dalcroze Eurhythmics can be considered a meta-narrative that legitimizes a particular version of 'educational truths', suggesting a direction for musical growth; a philosophy or a philosophic attitude that draws attention to a holistic view of the human being and embodied learning and knowing in music; and/or a pedagogy or an approach that points to the role and relevance of the body and body movement in musical action and learning, and includes certain pedagogical principles. Although Jaques-Dalcroze's educational ideas remain relevant in music education and in related fields today, the Dalcroze approach (or any other approach) in itself does not guarantee good teaching, experience, or results – the quality of teaching and learning is always dependent on a spectrum of variables, such as teacher quality, lesson design, and so forth. What really matters is how the pedagogical ideas are applied. A problem arises if a teacher chooses to utilize Dalcroze, or indeed any approach, blindly, without carefully considering its relation to the curriculum and its potential to meaningfully engage learners in a specific context (Abril & Gault, 2016, p.1). As Kohn (1993) suggests (cited in ibid.): "it is a good idea to challenge ourselves…about anything we have come to take for granted; the more habitual, the more valuable this line of inquiry".

Benedict (2016) reminds us that whether something is a method or an approach (or something else) is "depended on the context and the usage" (p. 349) and that there is not nothing wrong with method until it becomes so taken for granted that we forget to question *what*, *how*, and *why* we do what we do. We as Dalcroze practitioners should always keep asking why we are doing what we are doing, and not only be satisfied if something just seems to 'work' or 'entertain' (see, Abril, 2016). Teaching and learning should always be relevant and meaningful for whom the pedagogy was developed: that is, the students or other participants. It has become ever more evident that music education needs to better recognize the students' own viewpoints, their freedom to decide on the *whats* and *hows* of learning (Green, 2008). This idea challenges the earlier consensus that better teaching, meaning clearer ideas on the whats and hows of teaching, is the key to higher student learning and achievement (Westerlund & Juntu- nen, 2011).

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