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ELEMENTARY RHYTHM PEDAGOGY ANALYSIS

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Music Education
at

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ELEMENTARY RHYTHM PEDAGOGY ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Elementary Rhythm Pedagogy Analysis

Antonio Griffin Jr., Master of Music Education, 2021

Thesis Directed by: Katherine Herrell, Associate Professor of Music

Rhythm is a foundational element for a child's development. Rhythm builds motor skills, aids in language acquisition, and is at the root of all musical experience. While the concept of rhythm is universal, there is no universal approach that educators agree best helps students develop rhythmic ability. This research seeks to discover the most common research-based methods and better practices for elementary rhythm instruction and align each to current national music standards and expectations.

Keywords: rhythm; elementary music; notation; Orff; Suzuki; Dalcroze; Kodály

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Elementary Rhythm Pedagogy Analysis

One of the earliest musical skills children develop is a sense of rhythm. Children learn this skill through play and exploration, and it is perhaps one of the most fundamental concepts of musical development (Ester et al., 2006). While rhythm may be at the core of all musical experiences, consistency in instruction is hard to find amongst school districts, content areas, and classrooms within the same school (Dalby, 2005). Even components of music as standardized as notational practice quickly become sources of confusion and debate amongst music educators. As many states migrate towards the implementation of the national core arts standards and develop aligned curriculum, an opportunity has been created for school districts like mine to review rhythm pedagogy and best practices.

Until recently, the school district where I currently serve as the general music lead has embraced a practice of allowing every music teacher complete autonomy in instructional practices and methodology. While a degree of autonomy is beneficial for students and teachers, a level of consistency is required to ensure students have all the skills needed as they transition from elementary to secondary music education. Our lack of consistency is a major flaw pointed out by a middle school string teacher who noticed that her 6th grade orchestra was composed of students with various degrees of notation experience and rhythm ability. Of greater concern was the observation that students had no common method of audiation (a cognitive process by which the brain gives meaning to musical sounds) or vocalization (Gordon Institute for Music Learning, 2021).

With our school district in the midst of revamping our curriculum, and the realizations of rhythm experience disparities among students, I have developed the following research question:

What are the most common methodologies used to teach rhythm at the elementary school level, and how can I develop a curriculum that leverages the strengths of each?

Literature Review

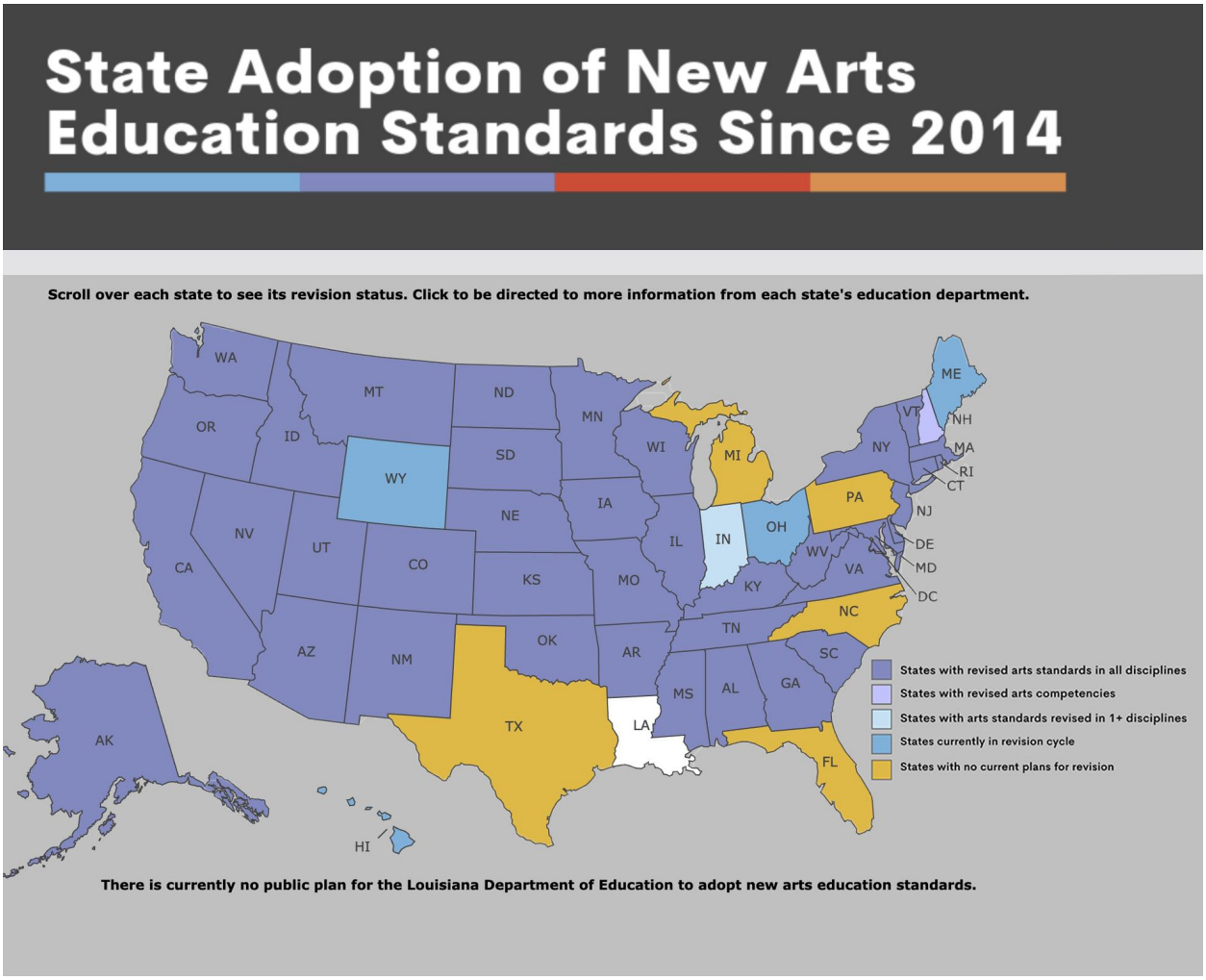
There are several widely accepted methods for teaching music, each accompanied by its own approach to rhythm pedagogy. There are the French inspired rhythm syllable systems of the Kodály, Gordon, and Takadimi methods. Other methods choose to focus on movement and internalization like those of Dalcroze and Orff Schulwerk. Because of the wide range of options, a common challenge for music programs is crafting a curriculum that facilitates learning based on how students develop and form schema (Miller, 2007). The following rhythm pedagogy research will serve as a launching point for the synthesis of a curriculum that utilizes the most culturally, developmentally, and musically appropriate elements of the most popular music education methods. The best place to start this journey is at the end. What rhythm skills and musical outcomes are expected of elementary students in the United States?

Rhythm Standards & Outcomes

After two years of educators across the country contributing to their development, the National Core Arts Standards were finalized in 2014.These standards, created by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), focus on providing "standards and supplemental materials that will be of maximum help to arts/music educators, both in shaping their instructional programs and in advocating for those programs (Shuler et al., 2014)." While every state is not required to adopt these standards, 43 states have either begun to revise their current arts standards or have completed their revision processes of aligning their state standards to the national core arts standards. Figure 1 shows each state as it stands in its revision process.

Figure 1

National Arts Standards Adoption



Note. This map, created by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, shows each state as it stands in the national arts standards adoption process as of March 2021. Adapted from State Adoption of New Arts Education Standards Since 2014 by National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2021. (https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/map)

The general music standards, which elementary music teachers typically follow, are broken down into four artistic processes representing the way people engage with music: Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Interacting with music in these ways aids

students in becoming stronger musicians. successful 21st century world citizens and connected to their cultures and communities. Though these categories have unique standards under their umbrellas, each process is working towards the goal of developing music literacy in students, such that transcends the ability to read and write notation (Schuler et al., 2014). In the article "The New National Standards for Music Educators" the authors define musical literacy as the ability to convey and understand how others convey ideas through music" (Shuler et. al., 2014). Another major goal of the latest iteration of music standards is creating independent learners who take an active role in their music making as teachers facilitate the process (Rawlings, 2013; Schuler et al., 2014).

Language & Rhythm

For several years, educators and researchers have made claims of variable credibility that formal music instruction can assist in acquiring literacy skills (Moritz et al., 2013). Could it be possible that a student's literacy proficiency also has an impact on the acquisition of musical skills such as rhythm? This is an important question to consider given the limited written and oral language experience of primary school students and one that a handful of studies have attempted to answer.

Connections between components of music and phonological awareness can be seen as early as infancy. Several studies have shown that even infants are able to perceive subtle changes in tempo and rhythmic patterns (Moritz et al., 2013; Ordin et al., 2019). The connection between language and music seems to grow deeper and more complex over time. Anvari et al. (2002) tested the ability of children ages 4 through 5 to echo rhythms and distinguish between two different rhythmic patterns. These tested abilities were significantly related to several phonological skills, such as rhyme generation. Another study by Holliman et al. (2010) found

similar results when looking at children aged 6 through 7. The same skills of echoing and rhythmic discrimination showed a strong relationship to phonological skills like rhyming words and phoneme deletion. Finally, Mortiz et al. (2013) found that students aged 10 through 16 with a reading disability demonstrate more challenges when asked to perform tasks such as echoing rhythms. This indicates that students with reading disabilities may struggle in their development of rhythm skills.

Rhythm Syllable Systems

Some music education methods rely heavily on the relationship between language and rhythm. The Kodály method of music instruction is extremely popular in United States music classrooms and strongly advocates learning music through the use of the voice, a child's natural instrument (deVries, 2001). The essential tools of Kodály include singing, movable do solfège, hand signs, singing on letter names, movement, and most relevant to this research, rhythm syllables (Bowyer, 2015). The idea is that students learn a song and are able to switch fluently between each of these tools, utilizing rhythm syllables at the sight-reading stage (Bowyer, 2015).

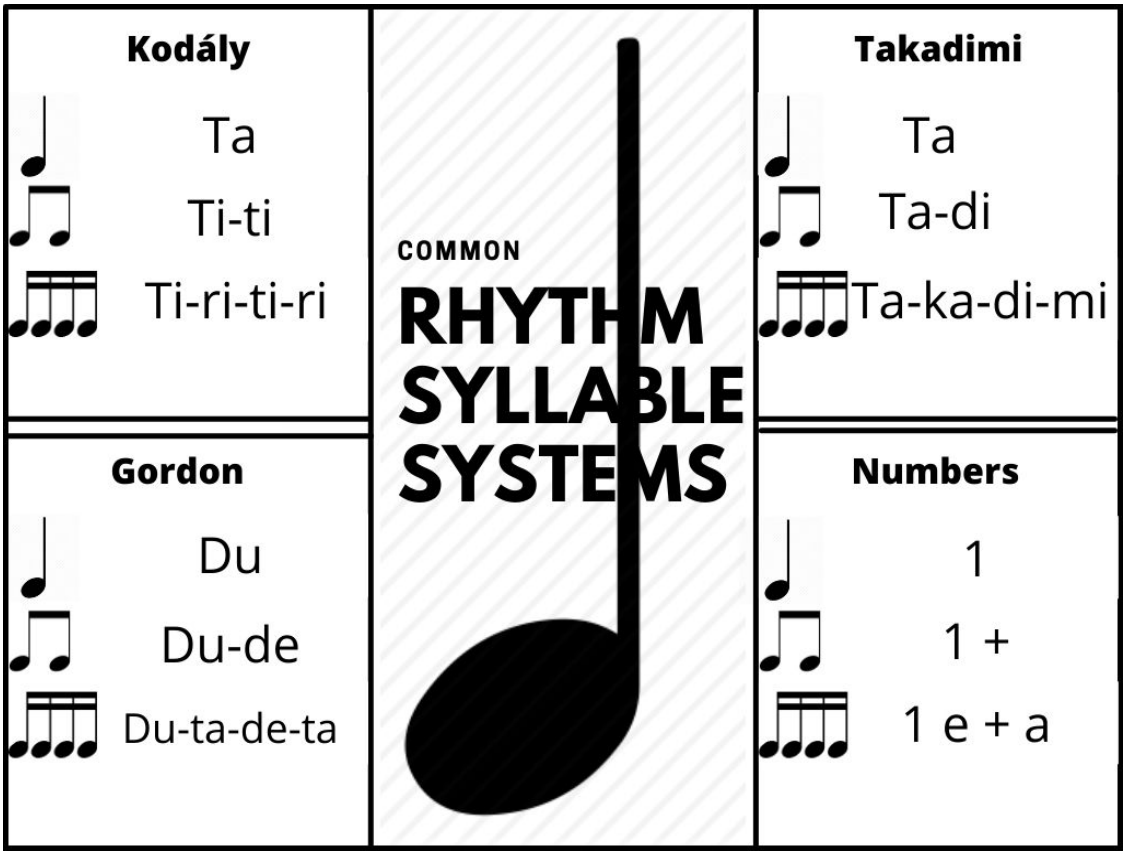
Finding its principles based on the work of Hungarian philosopher Zoltán Kodály, the Kodály rhythm syllable system assigns short mnemonic sounds to the most common simple rhythms (i.e., ta = quarter note; ti-ti = paired eighth notes) and disregards a rhythm's location within the beat (Bowyer, 2015). This methodology also approaches rhythm in a sequential way. There are specific orders in which students are introduced to rhythmic patterns and symbols. Students do not receive actual mathematical explanations of rhythm until a significant level of experience is acquired (Martinho, 2015). However, as is the trend with much of music pedagogy, there are several options for syllable systems. Examples of some commonly used syllable

systems in the United States can be seen in figure 2. All of the syllabic systems are means of eliminating the awkwardness and sterile experience of numerical counting (Johnson, 2018).

One such prominent option can be found in Edwin Gordon's music learning theory, of which one of the most important principles is the idea of sound over symbol, that is, drawing more attention to how music sounds rather than the notation (Dalby, 2005).

Figure 2

Rhythm Syllable Systems



Subscribers to Gordon's theory finds that there is more to a comprehensive understanding of rhythm than the mathematical components (i.e., four quarter notes per measure in 4/4 or two eighth notes = one quarter note). A mathematical understanding of notation, rhythm, and meter does not guarantee a student can perform with rhythmic accuracy as

mathematical thinking and audiation are different cognitive processes (Dalby, 2005). Rhythmic audiation is, however, closely related to language processes, as studies listed earlier have demonstrated. The concept of sound over notation led to the development of Gordon's "du-ta-de-ta" rhythm system. This system, in contrast to Kodály's, assigns syllables based on a rhythms relation to the beat (Bowyer, 2015). Similarly, the Takadimi syllable system also assigns syllables based on a note's position on the beat, while attempting to provide a universal system that works for all ages and across choral, instrumental, and general music (Ester et al., 2006).

Movement & Rhythm

While Gordon and Kodaly focus on the ties between language and rhythm, others choose to emphasize movement as it relates to rhythm. Motor Theory states that our neuromuscular systems can be conditioned to respond to rhythmic stimuli (Zachopoulou et al., 2003). Carl Orff, a German composer and music educator, partially based his popular Orff Schulwerk approach on the idea that music, movement, and speech are related through the concept of rhythm (Zachopoulou et al., 2003). This approach to rhythm utilizes rhythms found in the world through play and exploration. Unlike methods like Gordon and Kodaly, Orff associates real words with rhythms based on their syllabic count and encourages the use of natural speech patterns to teach rhythm (Ester et al., 2006; Martinho, 2015). For example, the word avocado, containing four syllables, may be associated with four consecutive sixteenth notes. Many Orff teachers may invest fully into an iconic notation system. Allowing students time to marinate in iconic representation rather than the traditional symbolic notation facilitates a deeper understanding of musical elements rather than blind regurgitation of information (Miller, 2007).

While speech does play a role in the Orff approach, the heart of this methodology is still movement. The Orff methodology emphasizes that students should be active participants in

music. Nearly every activity or piece is accompanied with physical stimuli (Martinho, 2015). Jessica Johnson (2018) calls this process "musical embodiment" and states that it "helps students feel the music in their bones, as well as discover fundamental aspects of rhythm such as, beat, tempo, duration, phrasing, flow, energy and weight without requiring an understanding of musical notation or theoreti-cal concepts" (p. 17). As physicality relates to rhythm, virtually any movement can be performed to specific rhythms (Zachopoulou et al., 2003). For example, elementary students participating in an Orff lesson may be asked to jump to the rhythm of the rhythmic motif found throughout Beethoven's 5th Symphony. Orff's philosophy of movement is greatly inspired by the research of Dalcroze eurythmics (Martinho, 2015).

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze created a method of "music through movement" instruction called Eurhythmics. Eurythmics stresses that whole-body participation allows for a more complete and accurate perception and understanding of rhythm and musical awareness (Dell, 2010; Martinho, 2015). However, Dalcroze distinguishes itself from Orff in a few important ways. First, eurythmics educators believe that movement is the source of all rhythm (Zachopoulou et al., 2003). Therefore, a student's rhythmic capabilities only go as far as their locomotor skills. This leads to the second distinction between these music-movement methods. The Dalcroze method incorporates the child's natural repertoire of movements primarily through improvisation. While the importance of improvisation is not a distinction between Orff Schulwerk and Dalcroze Eurythmics, Dalcroze relies heavily on the improvisation of "movement," in contrast to the "rhythmic" improvisation of Orff. The goal is no longer using movement as a means to improve rhythmic ability, but to build upon a student's limited tempo and movement experience as rhythm improves naturally.

Maturation vs. Training

Some research has been provided, particularly at the elementary level, that rhythmic ability can only be improved through natural development rather than instruction. This group of researchers and biologists believe that rhythm is an inherent ability based on internal biological timer and genetics. Researchers such as William Groves (1969), Robert McDowell (1974), and several others conducted studies that show no relationship between musical training and rhythm skill development (Zachopoulou, 2003). Similarly, over three quarters of educators believe that music requires some sort of innate talent or proclivity (Scripp et al., 2013).

Other researchers, the behaviorists, believe that a music training program is fundamental in improving rhythm and other musical skills (Kinney & Forsythe, 2012; Zachopoulou et al., 2013). Anders Ericsson, a psychologist and expertise researcher, found that what many call talent is actually expertise acquisition and that there is no identifiable inheritable trait that contributes to superior musical ability (Scripp et al., 2013). Another study published in 1976 found that utilizing and alternating the elements of rhythm in a music training program supports the development of rhythmic abilities. Those elements include (Zachopoulou et al., 2003):

- the basic pulse
- the accent- can be expressed by sonorous sounds or high intensity movements
- the tempo- can be expressed by high, moderate, and low speed (invariant or variant)
- the rhythmic motive- short series of sounds or movements performed according to a determined beat, which can be either isochronous (e.g., walling) or not (e.g., the rhythm of polca in which the temporal interval between the beats varies)
- the musical phrase- groups of rhythmic determination of the program's content is of motives which provide the sensation of temporal completion.

The idea of training over maturation is taken to another level with the Suzuki methodology. In fact, the primary philosophy of the Suzuki approach is that every child can be educated through the environment (Barber, 1991; Scripp et. al., 2013). Suzuki educators reject the common misconception that musical skill is an inborn talent. Because of this belief, children as young as three years old may begin receiving instrumental training Barber, 1991).

Also recognizing the similarities between language and music, students of Suzuki learn to communicate through their instruments before learning note-reading similar to the way a child learns to speak before reading (Barber, 1991). Teachers are given autonomy with the process of teaching note reading and when it is appropriate to introduce notation. However, Shinichi Suzuki recommends that students not move on to something new before they are ready (Barber, 1991). Many educators have found success teaching instrument skills and note reading together from the beginning, ensuring to distinguish the two as separate skills (Barber, 1991).

Methodology

Student Population

The student population this synthesized rhythm curriculum will serve is located in the suburban St. Louis, MO. school district of Ferguson-Florissant. Missouri is one of the 43 states that has completed the revision cycle of aligning its state standards to the national core arts standards. According to data updated in 2018 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), approximately 59% of students are black, 34% are white, 3% are Latino, 1% are Asian, and 3% identify as biracial. Extremely relevant to this research, the NCES also indicates that approximately 96.7% of households in this district only speak English at home. Of the other 3.3%, only .5% identify as not being proficient in English. Furthermore, The Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education reports that currently 100 percent of students receive free lunch services.

Elementary schools in the Ferguson-Florissant school district are divided into two grade spans: primary (PrK-2) and intermediate (3-5). All elementary students receive 90 minutes of general music instruction. However, the frequency of music instruction is determined at the building level rather than at a district level. This means students at one primary school may receive music instruction 3 times per week for 30 minutes, where another primary school may receive music instruction twice per week for 45 minutes. General music does continue at the 6th grade level, though the number of minutes varies as they utilize an AB rotating schedule. Generally, students who attend one of this district's 6th grade academies will receive 60-90 minutes of music instruction per week for one quarter of the school year. As stated earlier, there is no unified curriculum for this district at the moment. General music teachers either draw material from the "Spotlight on Music" series of textbooks, "Music & the Brain," a keyboard instruction method from New York, or personal Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze training or lessons.

Starting in 3rd grade students are given the option to join a school's orchestra, choir (if available), and guitar (if available) programs, as well as the option to join their band program in 4th grade. It is important to note that orchestra and band are not considered "extra" music training, as it typically occurs during a student's scheduled general music class.

Focus Standards

The general goal of early rhythm training is to build an internal awareness of pulse and scaffold an in-depth awareness and understanding of rhythms numerous components (Johnson, 2018). As stated earlier, the national arts standards represent all the ways children can interact with music. This has led to general music standards becoming broad overarching goals and thus

many are related to the development of rhythm skills. This research will focus only on performing and creating standards at the kindergarten, 2nd, and 4th grade levels.

Results & Rationales

Kindergarten- Orff Schulwerk & Dalcroze Eurhythmics

An important point of consideration is that the kindergarten standards that relate to rhythm do not mention elements of rhythm commonly found in Eurocentric and traditional music-making, such as standard notation and meter. Instead, students utilize iconic notation which is native to the Orff methodology. As stated earlier, Orff uses familiar pictures and words taken from the world to represent notational, structural, and expressive elements of music. There are numerous programs and resources that utilize a system of iconic notation. The one that I am suggesting at the primary school level is created by an online program called Prodigies Music Lessons. This program has many activities ranging from reading rhythms in a circle, like on a clock, to the popular "Sweet Beats" which I recommend for primary students. The Sweet Beat system of iconic notation uses foods to represent standard notation. For example, cherries would represent paired eighth notes, while beats represent quarter notes. The Sweet Beats activity in Appendix A includes an example pattern and lesson which addresses standard MU: Cr2A. Kb (with guidance, generate musical ideas (such as movements or motives).

Standard MU: Cr1A.Ka (with guidance, explore and experience music concepts (such as beat and melodic contour) does not focus on developing hard skills, which some see as the best use for methodologies like Kodály and Suzuki (deVries, 2001). Instead, students are asked to explore (a skill native to Eurhythmics) and experience (a skill embedded in Orff) the specific rhythmic concept of beat. One activity that I've found success with is a game called "Beat Energy!" This activity is a simple warm-up that helps prime students for a lesson invested in

rhythmic development. The basis of this activity is a game, and as Orff educators know well, play is important for Kindergartners to become engaged with a concept. The extension of this activity asks students to stretch into their upper levels of thinking and improvise (create) their own actions. This is where Eurhythmics shines, allowing students to demonstrate their beat awareness by eliminating the barrier of imposed movements and freeing students to use natural movements from their repertoire of locomotor skills.

The last activity listed for developing rhythm in Kindergartners also leverages components of Orff and Eurhythmics. Living Illustration is an activity employed by music educators everywhere and, depending on how it is implemented, can hit both several standards at once. The way the activity is outlined in Appendix A will help students work towards two standards:

- MU: Cr1A.Kb- With guidance, generate musical ideas (such as movements or motives).
- MU: Cr2A.Kb- With guidance, organize personal musical ideas using iconic notation and/or recording technology.

The first standard lists movements as an example of a musical idea for students to work with. In lieu of formal dance classes/teachers at the elementary level, as well as the recommendations of research-based methods like the ones suggested for kindergarten in this section, my school district chose to make movement and dance a major goal for elementary music classes. In Living Illustration students listen to a story and develop actions to represent elements of the story that are rhythmic based. This could be a knock on the door, or bunnies hopping down a path. This strategy can be found in both Orff and Eurhythmics classrooms. Once students generate their

movements, they can decide how they can notate it so that everyone remembers what to do. Students should use iconic notation as dictated in the standard.

2nd Grade- Orff, Kodály, & Eurythmics

While the kindergarten rhythm standards ask for students to do very broad and generic activities like exploring and experiencing, at the second-grade level tasks and skills become more concrete and defined. For example, 2nd grade students are now asked to do more higher-level thinking tasks such as demonstrating and analyzing. Furthermore, the notational experience of 2nd grade students should now include standard notation and rhythmic patterns. All of these changes introduced at the 2nd grade level are aspects of the Kodály methodology. However, this does not beg for an immediate elimination of the foundational practices students have used to this point. Instead, I propose thinking of 2nd grade as a transition year where more formal elements of music and practices are introduced. This seems even more practical when considering students in my school district go to intermediate schools in 3rd grade where orchestra, guitar, and choir begin.

One activity to aid in the transition from iconic to recording technology and standard notation is Chrome Music Lab. The Chrome Music Lab website is a hub of music related experiments and activities created by Google and has been extremely useful especially in virtual and concurrent teaching environments. This activity aligns with standard MU: Cr1A.2b, which states, “Generate musical patterns and ideas within the context of a given tonality (such as major and minor) and meter (such as duple and triple).” and MU: Cr2A.2b, which states, “Use iconic or standard notation and/or recording technology to combine, sequence, and document personal musical ideas.” Students are assigned rhythms in the same order that Kodály recommends introducing rhythms. Students begin by creating the rhythm using iconic notation. They continue

through the activity by translating the iconic notation to standard notation, and then to a sequence. This approaches notation as if it were a language. For example, the words music, musique, and música all mean the same thing. They are just different languages. This activity tries to create musically multi-linguistic musicians. That is, students who can operate in more than one musical language (i.e., iconic notation, standard notation, recording technology). A task not so out of reach considering the cognitive similarities between processing language and rhythm as listed earlier.

Related to the topic of language and rhythm, much of the research that led to the creation of the most common elementary music methodologies recommends removing the mathematical component of rhythm until students have a holistic understanding and internalized connection with rhythm. Therefore, a syllable system is an ideal form of audiation at this grade level rather than a counting system. The Takidimi system provides many benefits, the most important of which being that it was created to be a system for all ages. The system also takes into account a rhythms relation to the meter, scaffolding a mathematical understanding of rhythm later on.

The activity “Rhythm Among Us” is a fun activity that helps students not only practice reading standard notation but listening skills as well. The game “Among Us” has become extremely popular in the past few years and this activity attempts to capitalize on student interests. Students are given a set of rhythms which are ordered according to Kodály’s sequences. One student will have a set with a few missing rhythms. Their job is to try to fake their way through the missing rhythms, so they are not caught. Students read through the rhythms using Takadimi syllables and also listen to see if other students are reading it wrong as they try to both convince others they are real and figure out who is fake at the same time. This activity utilizes the sequences of Kodály as well as a syllable system. The games and play

component of Orff is also incorporated as students work toward standard MU: Pr4B.2b (when analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation).

The final activity is a rap several of my students helped me come up with during my first two years teaching. Rap is a great way to work on rhythm since that's where its beauty lies. Often other musical elements, such as pitch or dynamics, are not important for a rap song. This activity uses this, as well as a "cypher" or "freestyle" way of performing, which is just hip-hop's way of saying improvisation. Students rap through the song and create their own ostinato at the improvisation section. Then other students repeat that ostinato and the process repeats. This simple activity is packed with aspects of Orff, Kodály, and Eurhythmics. Children's songs, movement, and the use of percussion instruments come from Orff Schulwerk. Kodály advocates for the use of folk music, which for much of the American population, includes rap music. Finally, Eurhythmics prescribes improvisation as a key component of music lessons.

4th Grade- Orff, Kodály, & Suzuki

The 4th grade rhythm-oriented standards are written similarly to the 2nd grade standards. The tasks and concepts are almost exactly identical. Students are refining skills such as pulse, notation literacy, and improvisation, which they have started working on around 2nd grade. This is a great time to introduce a mathematical understanding of notation and meter. According to the Missouri Learning standards, students don't begin instruction on fraction operations (time signatures in music) until 3rd grade. This gives students a chance for them to get the foundational knowledge of fractions before they have to apply it in a novel situation like music class.

Charlene Dell (2010) gives several activities towards helping students not just count the beats, but also feel them. The activity, The Switch Game, incorporates string playing technique while trying to build metrical and rhythmic awareness. This activity is timely as several students will have joined orchestra, guitar club, or have experience playing classroom ukulele. The incorporation of string instruments as well as the structured progression of this lesson is taken from Suzuki methods. Students begin by playing consecutive sixteenth notes on an open string. To modify this for a general music setting, students can play guitars, ukuleles, or percussion instruments you have handy. When the teacher calls "switch," students move to the next largest subdivision (i.e., consecutive eighth notes). I recommend using a metronome so students can accurately hear the amount of space each note is taking up. Dell also offers extensions of this activity where students have to "switch up" by moving to larger subdivisions, or "switch down" by moving to smaller subdivisions. Another extension divides the class into groups, each playing a different division of the beat. According to Dell (2010) this extension helps students understand how different note lengths are related and how to place those various note lengths within each other. This activity advances students towards meeting standard MU: Pr4B.4a stating, "Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form) in music selected for performance."

Standards MU: Cr1A.4b (Generate musical ideas) and MU: Cr2A.4b (b. Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal musical ideas) will often be addressed within the same activity. The Earsketch activity is a more rigorous version of the Chrome Music Lab activity that provides opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration. Earsketch is an online program where students create original songs from a sample library of both original and licensed music. However, the way students put these songs together is what

makes this activity unique. Students assemble songs through coding. Students learn the basics of coding in library and media classes, then use those skills in music to construct music in general music class. To help provide focus to this activity, students should receive a set of goals of what they need to accomplish. For example, students may need to create an accompaniment to the song “All Fall Down” using percussion instruments in their choice of 4/4 or 6/8.

Another thing to note about the music standards is that students are increasingly expected to make connections between music and the cultural, political, and social factors that influence artistic creation and performance. The activity, Daybreak Express, uses Orff/percussion instruments for students to improvise rhythmic elements to the song after which this activity is named. With the exception of Suzuki which has a specific repertoire of pieces to be studied, the methodologies discussed within this research recommend using music from the students’ cultures and folk music as a basis for music development. For a school district with a minority dense population, jazz is an important component of their musical heritage. Students listen to the way Duke Ellington utilizes different sounds to invoke the sound of a large locomotive. Students then improvise their own ideas to emulate the rhythms of the piece and then improvise rhythms for other objects, people, and places. An important component of this lesson is the discussion about why this piece was possibly composed. This activity will help students teach standard MU: Cr1A.4a (Improvise rhythmic, melodic and harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context (such as social and cultural).

Conclusion

The above resources and activities are to be considered a jumping off point for music educators, especially those serving similar communities, to rethink the goals and strategies they have in place for rhythm pedagogy at the elementary level. While students at all ages may

benefit from the mathematical explanations of rhythm, commonly accepted research-based methodologies suggest removing the mathematical component in favor of active experiences, such as play and movement. They also suggest the utilization of sound-based systems for audiation like Takadimi. It is also important to remember that a complete understanding of rhythm is not something that can be mastered quickly as there are numerous elements to consider such as notation, meter, beat, improvisation, and internalization. Also, it is important that I acknowledge that no methodology stands alone. The methodologies listed in this research should not exist on their own. These are pedagogies for elementary general music. This means that students are receiving instruction in all areas of music and all learning styles will be present. To facilitate learning for all learning styles and interests, a combination of all these methodologies is required. The standards listed in this research and their suggested aligned methodologies will hopefully serve as a point of departure to tastefully homogenizing elementary music education in disjointed school districts such as mine.

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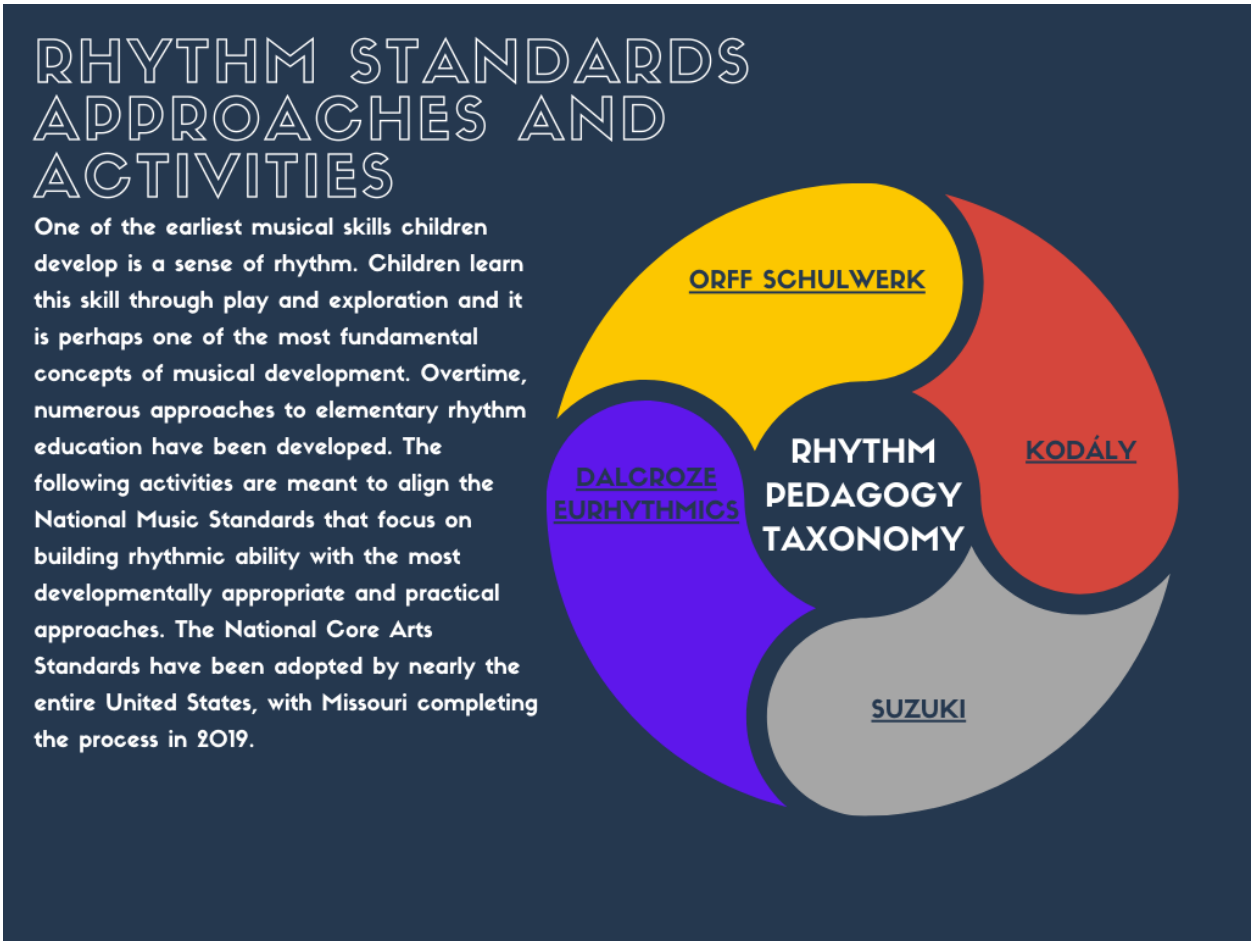
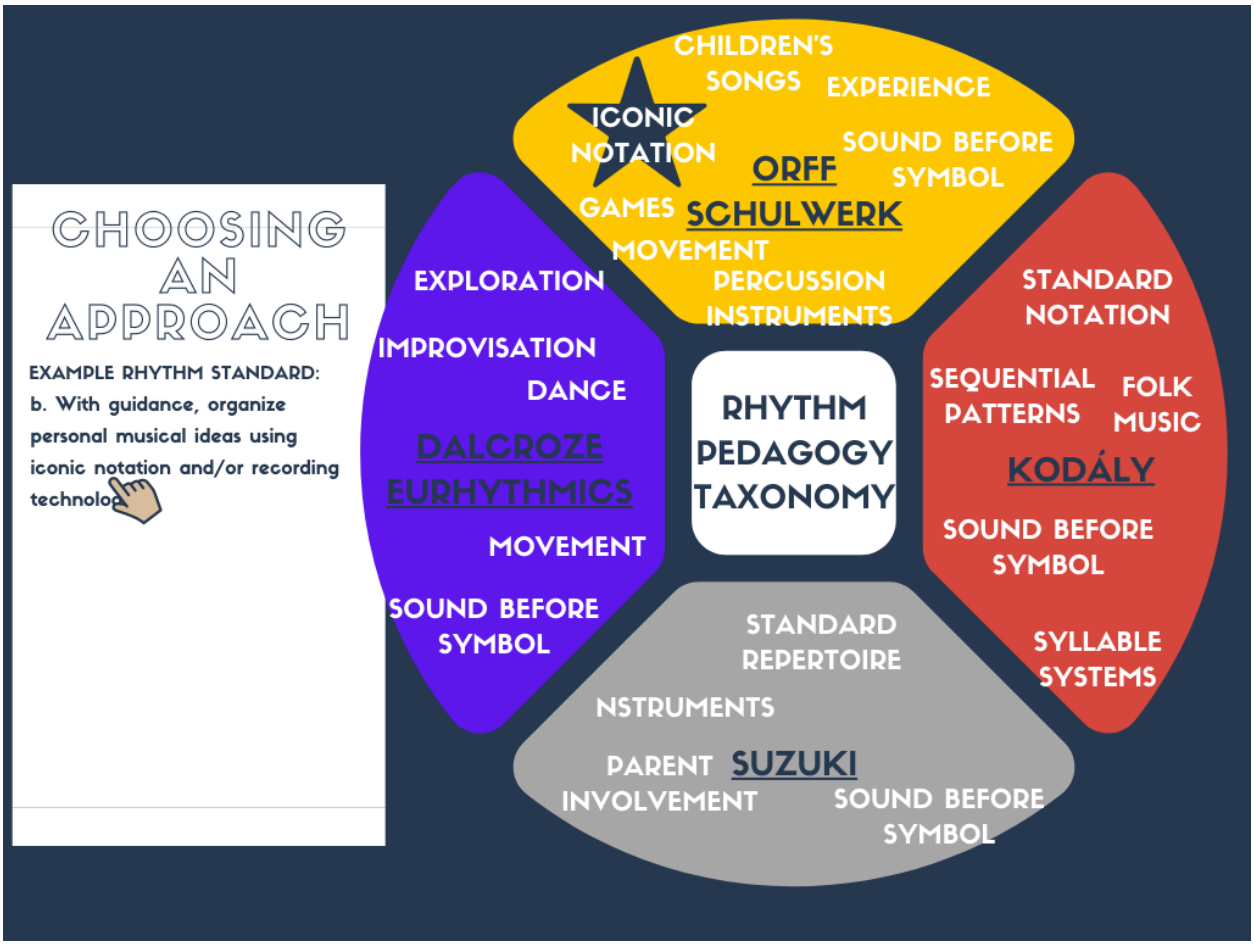
Appendix A


RHYTHM STANDARDS APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES
One of the earliest musical skills children develop is a sense of rhythm. Children learn this skill through play and exploration and it is perhaps one of the most fundamental concepts of musical development. Overtime, numerous approaches to elementary rhythm education have been developed. The following activities are meant to align the National Music Standards that focus on building rhythmic ability with the most developmentally appropriate and practical approaches. The National Core Arts Standards have been adopted by nearly the entire United States, with Missouri completing the process in 2019.
ORFF SCHULWERK
KODÁLY
DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS
RHYTHM PEDAGOGY TAXONOMY
SUZUKI


CHOOSING AN APPROACH
EXAMPLE RHYTHM STANDARD:
b. With guidance, organize personal musical ideas using iconic notation and/or recording technolog
CHILDREN'S SONGS
EXPERIENCE
ICONIC NOTATION
SOUND BEFORE SYMBOL
ORFF
GAMES
SCHULWERK
MOVEMENT
PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS
EXPLORATION
IMPROVISATION
DANCE
DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS
MOVEMENT
SOUND BEFORE SYMBOL
RHYTHM PEDAGOGY TAXONOMY
STANDARD NOTATION
SEQUENTIAL PATTERNS
FOLK MUSIC
KODÁLY
SOUND BEFORE SYMBOL
SYLLABLE SYSTEMS
STANDARD REPERTOIRE
NSTRUMENTS
PARENT INVOLVEMENT
SUZUKI
SOUND BEFORE SYMBOL

KINDERGARTEN ALIGNMENT

An important point of consideration is that the kindergarten standards that relate to rhythm do not mention elements of rhythm commonly found in eurocentric and traditional music-making. Terms such as standard notation and meter are omitted. Instead, kindergarten music standards are generally about guided exploration, experience, and movement. Students' perceptions of music, such as long/short and duple/triple have not been developed. Therefore, icons and non-linguistic representation is important. a

	ORFF SCHULWERK	KODÁLY	SUZUKI	DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS
With guidance, explore and experience music concepts (such as beat and melodic contour).	X			X
With guidance, generate musical ideas (such as movements or motives).	X			X
With guidance, organize personal musical ideas using iconic notation and/or recording technology.	X			X
With guidance, explore and demonstrate awareness of music contrasts (such as high/low, loud/soft, same/different) in a variety of music selected for performance	X		X	X

KINDERGARTEN

ORFF/EURHYTHMICS

- With guidance, explore and experience music concepts (such as beat and melodic contour).

BEAT ENERGY!

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Keep a steady beat

This is a great and simple warm-up activity for all primary aged students but really can get kindergarteners in tune and energized for a thythm focused lesson. This activity takes the games and play elements of Orff Schulwerk, as well as the improvisational component of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the extension. Of course both methodoligies embrace movement which is at the heart of Beat Energy.

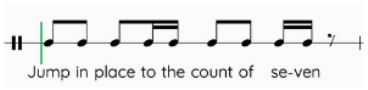
1 INTRODUCTION (first time only)

- Explain that this is a game and a way of getting our bodies ready to "feel" the music. Their job is to see if they can count and move at the same time. Let's see if they can win by remembering to count, nive, and stop at the right time. If they count or move too many times they lose a point. If they get it just right, they get a point! Explain that they have to concentrate and also pay attention to how fast you count them off so they move at the right tempo!

2 ACTIVITY

- Have a student pick a number 1-10.
- Count the students off, asking them to do an action while counting the number of times the chosen student selected. Play an instrument to help students hear the steady beat/tempo they should be moving at.
- (Make sure the movements are matching the steady beat you are playing! Students will inevitably go faster or slower depending on their energy levels and the energy that is being built up the more times this is repeated.)

3 EXAMPLE COUNT OFF



4 EXAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSE

5 EXTENSION

- Have students improvise actions and you choose the number. Experiment allowing students to try to find the beat to different time signatures, improvised melodies, and with no count-off.

KINDERGARTEN | **ORFF**

With guidance, explore and demonstrate awareness of music contrasts (such as high/low, loud/soft, same/different) in a variety of music selected for performance

SWEET BEATS

(PRODIGIES MUSIC LESSONS)

Prodigies Music Lessons is an online subscription based service providing music instruction materials and lessons grounded in the methodologies of Orff, Kodály, and Suzuki. However, many of their instructional videos can be found on streaming sites like YouTube or evem done live which is the way I am recommending doing this activity. This activity works on a student's ability to echo rhythms as well as an opportunity to practice reading iconic notation that can be easily translated to standard notation later. Iconic notation, percussion instruments, echoing, and children songs are all important to the Orff methodology.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Keep a steady beat
- Perform simple rhythms in duple or triple meter
- Echo long and short rhythm patterns (quarter/eighth notes/rests)

1 Preperation

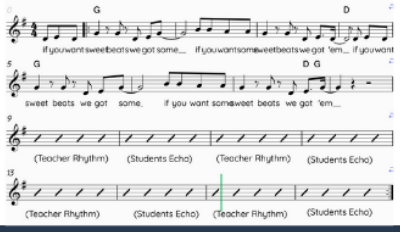
- Pass out percussion/Orff instruments to students. Students can use things like xylophones, boomwhackers, hand drums, shakers, etc. to echo rhythms.

2 ACTIVITY

- Introduce or review the sweet beat iconic notation system.
- Have students echo rhythm patterns from songs that will be learned in the rest of the music lesson or patterns to continue to build on their existing repertoire of patterns. (First have them echo without seeing the icons, and then with the icons.)
- Sing through "Sweet Beats" using either the recording or playing the accompaniment. Students should echo with their voices first until they are comfortable, then with voices and instruments after that.

3 EXAMPLE RHYTHM

4 SWEET BEATS



KINDERGARTEN | **ORFF/EURHYTHMICS**

LIVING ILLUSTRATION

The Living Illustration activity helps students draw connections between literacy and rhythm, two very similar cognitive processes. Students will have to visualize a story and generate movements or actions to help illustrate that story. Students will perform the story and actions as it's narrated (Eurhythmics) and then use iconic notation to represent the actions they created (Orff). This is a common activity used with younger primary students and could even be performed for a concert or event.

- With guidance, generate musical ideas (such as movements or motives).
- With guidance, organize personal musical ideas using iconic notation and/or recording technology.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Keep a steady beat
- Perform simple rhythms in duple or triple meter
- Use iconic notation to reoresent motives and movements

1 PREPARATION

- Read through the story that children will be illustrating through movements. As you read, encourage students to visualize rhythms and movements that they feel may be present in the story. Students can either draw these things on a whiteboard/paper or just think of them.

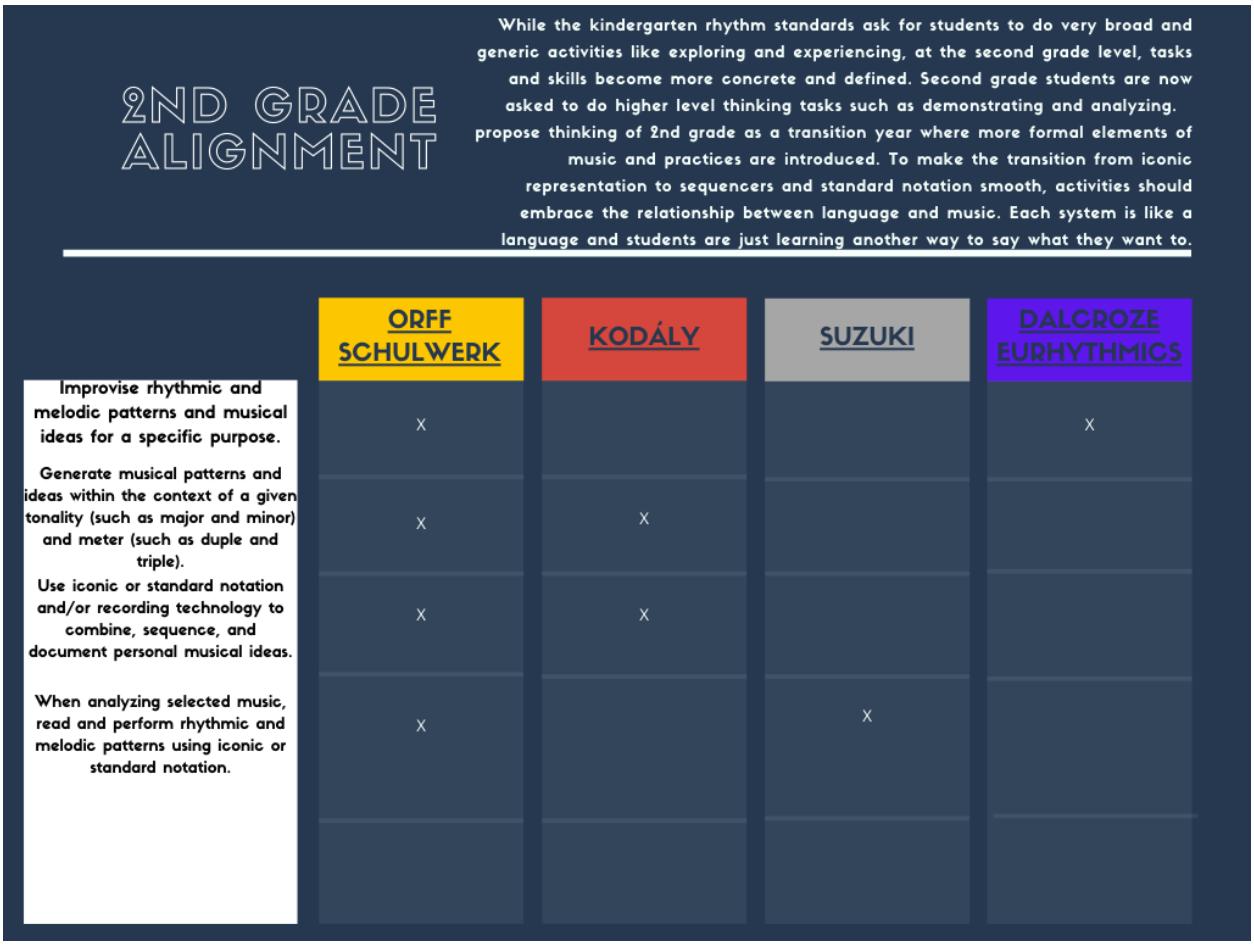
2 ACTIVITY

- Have students stand and find a safe space to move in the classroom (encourage students to explore the whole space instead of staying in one spot). They will be acting out parts of the story as you accompany on piano.
- Read through the story and stop at moments to see what actions or rhythms the students visualized or heard during the first read through. For example, a hammer hitting a nail might sound like four claps or might look like someone hammering a nail). A spin might sound like a glissando on the piano.
- Once a rhythm is agreed upon, ask students how they can notate it so everyone remembers what to do. Spinning for four beats might look like 4 tornados.

3 EXAMPLE RHYTHM (4 Spins/Quarter Notes)

4 EXAMPLE HALLOWEEN STORY

Late one night on Halloween,
Behind the sounds of children screams
A full moon lit the cloudless sky,
As a group of zombies began to rise.
Instantly their stomachs began to groan,
So in search of food they began to roam.
They came to a house, where food they hoped to find
They knocked real soft, at first 4 times.
(To be continued...)


2ND GRADE ALIGNMENT
While the kindergarten rhythm standards ask for students to do very broad and generic activities like exploring and experiencing, at the second grade level, tasks and skills become more concrete and defined. Second grade students are now asked to do higher level thinking tasks such as demonstrating and analyzing. propose thinking of 2nd grade as a transition year where more formal elements of music and practices are introduced. To make the transition from iconic representation to sequencers and standard notation smooth, activities should embrace the relationship between language and music. Each system is like a language and students are just learning another way to say what they want to.
ORFF SCHULWERK
KODÁLY
SUZUKI
DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS
Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose.
X
X
Generate musical patterns and ideas within the context of a given tonality (such as major and minor) and meter (such as duple and triple).
X
X
Use iconic or standard notation and/or recording technology to combine, sequence, and document personal musical ideas.
X
X
When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation.
X
X

2ND GRADE | **ORFF/EURHYTHMICS**

BREAK IT DOWN ONE TIME!

"Break It Down One Time!" is an activity that hits virtually all the rhythm standards, especially when the extension is incorporated. It's a rap, so it connects to modern music culture and can be done through any medium. Whether through instruments, movement, or vocally the students get very energetic. This activity uses kids songs, chants, and instruments from Orff, as well as improvisation of Eurhythmics.

- Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose.
- Generate musical patterns and ideas within the context of a given tonality (such as major and minor) and meter (such as duple and triple).

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Read and perform quarter, eighth, and half notes/rests
- improvise simple rhythms in 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4
- Use standard notation to create and capture musical ideas

1 Preparation

- Have students stand in a circle so that everyone is able to see their classmates clearly.

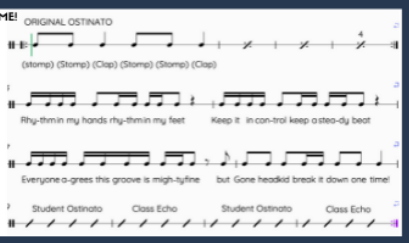
2 Activity

- Have all students begin by doing the "stomp, stomp, clap" ostinato from "We Will Rock You" by Queen.
- Rap through "Break It Down One Time." During the improvisation section, have students echo your movements (stomps, claps, snaps, vocalisations, etc.).
- The second time through the song, your improvised pattern becomes the new ostinato for the song. Choose a student to be echoed during the improvised section this time and their improvisation becomes the new ostinato.
- Repeat the song as many times as desired.

3 EXTENSION

- Instead of improvising rhythms on the fly, have students use standard notation to create a four beat rhythm. Students can also play the ostinatos on percussion instruments.
- During the improvisation section, have a student hold up their created rhythm while other students improvise actions to that rhythm.

4 BREAK IT DOWN ONE TIME!



2ND GRADE

ORFF/KODÁLY

When analyzing selected music, read and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns using iconic or standard notation.

RHYTHM AMONG US

Among us has become one of the most popular games of the past few years. Everywhere I turned, especially during concurrent teaching, students were either talking about it or playing it. This is a fun game for students to add a musical flare to a live action version of this popular game. This is also a great way to transition students into standard notation. Takadimi is a great syllable system since it takes into account a rhythms position in the measure in a given meter.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Read and perform quarter, eighth, and half notes/rests

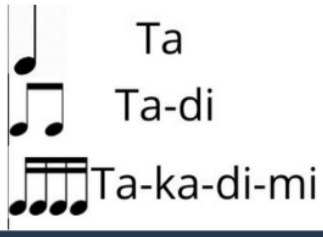
1 PREPARATION

- Assign every student a color and a rhythmics pattern set. Students can just remember their colors or students can get colored bracelets or stickers to help them remeber who is who.
- Each rhythm should be numbered so that students can keep track of which one they are on. One rhythm pattern set should have some blank rhythms since this will be an imposter set.
- Create designated standing spots around the classroom for students to randomly go to when it's time.

2 ACTIVITY

- Give students 10 seconds to find a standing spot around the room. Have students read through the first rhythm pattern using their rhythm syllable system (Takadimi suggested).
- After reading the rhythm 3 times, students vote on who they think the imposter is. Whoever they vote for is out. Repeat the process of finding standing spots, reading rhythms, and voting until the imposter is eliminated or 5 rounds have passed. If the imposter survives, they win!
- (The imposter rhythm set will have some blank rhythms so they will have to fake their way through it. Also if students mess up reading rhythms, others will think they are an imposter.)

3 TAKADIMI SYLLABLE SYSTEM



2ND GRADE | **ORFF/KODÁLY**

CHROME MUSIC LAB

Chrome Music Lab is a hub of musical experiments created by Google. It is a free service and no user accounts are required. The song maker section is an easy point of entry into sequencing for elementary students, a skill that is important for creating contemporary music. It is also an activity that works just as well for virtual and concurrent instruction as it does for in-person learning. There is an element of Orff with this activity with it being a game but also from the sequencing which is a form of iconic notation. Furthermore, students are beginning to switch to the use of standard notation at this grade. This activity introduces rhythmic patterns as they are introduced in the Kodaly system.

- Use iconic or standard notation and/or recording technology to combine, sequence, and document personal musical ideas.
- Generate musical patterns and ideas within the context of a given tonality (such as major and minor) and meter (such as duple and triple).

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Read/perform quarter, eighth, and half notes/rests
- Use a sequencer to create and capture musical ideas

1 Preparation

- Review the process of sending links for students to turn in sequenced rhythm patterns.

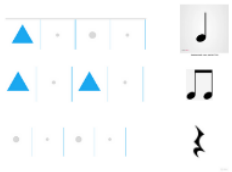
2 Activity

- Students first create the assigned rhythm using the chosen iconic notation system)for this example students will be using the Sweet Beat rhythms).
- Students should then transform the rhythms to standard notation. Have students compare answers and fix mistakes.
- Once the standard notation is correct, have students change the rhythm into their sequencer building blocks. They should draw the building blocks before attempting to input them into chrome music lab.
- Once students have successfully sequenced the rhythm, have students create their own rhythm using standard notation first, and the sequencer second.

3 EXTENSION

Turn this activity into a game by creating a list of tasks for students to complete. If students follow the tasks correctly, or whoever completes the most tasks wins. Tasks could include sequencing a drum pattern using only quarter notes, or create a rhythm where the snare and kick never play at the same rime.

4 EXAMPLE SEQUENCER BUILDING BLOCK-NOTATION TRANSLATION



4TH GRADE ALIGNMENT

Much of the difference between 2nd grade and 4th grade rhythm standards is in the complexity and guidance given as students reach these standards. By 4th grade, students are accomplishing similar tasks as 2nd grade with no guidance and a with a slight increase in rigor and complexity. Also, students are expected to make connections between music and external factors such as social, cultural, and economic influences.

	ORFF SCHULWERK	KODÁLY	SUZUKI	DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS
Improvise rhythmic, melodic and harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context (such as social and cultural).	X	X		
Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters	X	X		
Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal rhythmic, melodic, and simple harmonic musical ideas.	X	X		
Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm , pitch , and form) in music selected for performance.	X	X	X	
When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation.	X	X	X	

4TH GRADE

SUZUKI

THE SWITCH GAME

CHARLENE DELL

In the article "Strings Got Rhythm," Charlene Dell (2010) gives several activities towards helping students not just count the beats, but also feel them. This activity " incorporates string playing technique while trying to build metrical and rhythmic awareness. To modify this for a general music setting, students can play guitars, ukuleles, or percussion instruments you have handy. According to Dell (2010) the extensions help students understand how different note lengths are related and how to place those various note lengths within each other.

- Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm , pitch , and form) in music selected for performance.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Read and perform quarter, eighth, half, and sixteenth notes/rests using standard notation

1 **PREPARATION**

- Pass out and tune string instruments.

2 **ACTIVITY**

- Have students begin by playing consecutive sixteenth notes to a steady beat.
- Call "switch" and students should move to the next largest subdivision. In this case this is eighth notes.
- Repeat this process moving when students achieve consistency.

3 **EXTENSION**

- Version 1: Call "switch up" for students to switch to a larger subdivision and "switch down" for students to switch to a smaller one.
- Version 2: Divide the class into sections, each one playing a different subdivision of the beat. Call "switch" and have students cycle to the next subdivision.

4TH GRADE

ORFF

DAYBREAK EXPRESS

"This really simple activity tries to stretch the way students perceive music and rhythm by examining the song "Daybreak Express" by Duke Ellington. Students get to improvise using percussion instruments and explore the different ways people interpret rhythm without using notation.

- Improvise rhythmic, melodic and harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context (such as social and cultural).

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Improvise and create musical ideas in various genres and styles.
- improvise simple rhythms in 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8

1

- PREPARATION
- Pass out materials for students to draw/color what they visualize as they listen.
-
- Pass put instruments for students to improvise and play along with the piece.

2

ACTIVITY

- Start by having students listen to "Daybreak Express" and draw an image of what they might be hearing. Have them point out specifically what instrument or sound makes them feel that way.
- Point out that this song is supposed to make people think of a train. Listen again specifically targeting the snare drum. Have students first make the different sounds a train makes. Then try to see what instruments are making those sounds.
- Have students try to make the same sounds with various classroom instruments.
- Finally try to improvise making rhythms and patterns to represent other real world sounds.

4TH GRADE | **ORFF**

EARSKETCH

- Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal rhythmic, melodic, and simple harmonic musical ideas.
- Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Use a technology to create and capture musical ideas
- Use technology to perform music in various genres and styles

The "Earsketch" activity is a more rigorous version of the "Chrome Music Lab" activity that provides opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration. Earsketch is an online program where students create original songs from a sample library of both original and licensed music. However, the way students put these songs together is what makes this activity unique. Students assemble songs through coding. Students learn the basics of coding in library and media classes, then use those skills in music to construct music in general music class.

1 **Preparation**

- Coordinate with the librarian activity responsibilities.
- Students review coding basics and Earsketch essentials before beginning the creation portion in music class. This could be a song learned on instruments like the piano, or songs the students sing like "Hot Cross Buns."

2 Have students select a simple song from the repertoire of music they've learned in class. Using the sounds from Earsketch, have students create a percussion accompaniment for the song they chose.
Optional: Have students perform their songs for their classmates.

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