

Dalcroze for Musicians with Mobility Differences

American Eurhythmics Society Spring 2023 Work Shop

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Thank you for attending my session! The modifications suggested in this session are for students with *mobility* differences and are designed by a musician with a mobility issue. I have described these suggestions using generalities so they can be further adapted for your students. However, you will also find that these modifications are also beneficial for *all* students in your class.

Some definitions:

- ♪ Temporary Mobility Difference (TMD)—Students/musicians with a temporary injury preventing them from walking in their usual manner. They are likely to fully recover and return to their normal ability—examples: Crutches, bandages, casts, etc.
- ♪ Permanent Mobility Difference (PMD)—Students/musicians who do not walk like their peers. They may or may not experience challenges but have some type of difference that prevents them from a “normal” walking gate—examples: limp, amputation, cerebral palsy, etc.
- ♪ Mobility-Assisted Devices—Devices used to provide independent mobility. It may be temporary or permanent—examples: wheelchairs, canes, crutches, walkers, braces, etc.
- ♪ Hidden Mobility Differences—Mobility challenges experienced by a person that may not be obvious to an observer. They are sometimes diagnosed, sometimes not.

Mindset

The Dalcroze approach is for *everyone*.

Students with mobility differences can have same experiences as those without.

Focus on what students CAN do versus what they canNOT.

Give the option for *all* students to do the modified activities.

Be Flexible and have patience.

Repeat and adjust modification as needed.

The Three Pillars

I. Eurhythmics

- a. Modifications for moving through the space:
 - i. Shift the emphasis from feet to hands on the sternum (I prefer tips of fingers)
 - ii. The time-space-energy often discussed with feet can be shifted to feeling it in the sternum and the hand(s)
 - iii. Example:
 1. Galloping, skipping, marching, walking, and skating can be simulated by the hands. Describing how the body feels and moves when doing these actions may be necessary. Possible questions for students:
 - a. How does your body move when [Galloping, skipping, marching, walking, and skating]? Let's see if we can move our bodies without moving our feet.
 - b. Let's pretend our hands are our feet. How would they move?
- b. Racquet Balls:
 - i. Give students the option of sitting or standing when bouncing the balls. Giving a choice can help students with mobility challenges feel more included.
 - ii. Use a bigger size ball. Racquet balls can be challenging for some musicians to catch. They often have to use two hands to catch it (especially if they are younger). Likewise, catching a small object can be difficult for students who use canes, crutches, or sitting.
 - iii. Roll over bouncing.
 1. It may be easier for students with mobility assistance devices to sit on a chair or the floor and roll the ball instead of bouncing it. This can alleviate pressure on the limbs and/or provide balance security.
- c. Pulse and pulse division
 - i. Observe and learn about how students regularly get from one place to another or ask their IEP team. Then, use this as a starting point to make a modification.
 - ii. Examples:
 1. Students in wheelchairs use their arms in a repetitive movement that has its own pulse. This is the movement that should be used when moving to the pulse and division of the music.

II. Rhythmic Solfege

- a. Some students with mobility differences may be able to move forward and backward on the floor staff.
- b. Students with assisted devices:
 - i. Walking the floor staff:
 1. Some students may be able to move to the tone, but stepping multiple times may be painful or not possible to step numerous times on a tone. Therefore, allow some other type of movement as a substitute.
 - a. Example:

- i. The teacher wants students to sing and step: dddd-rrrr-mmmm-rrrr-dddd
 - ii. Students can step (or roll) to the tone and use their hands/bodies to move the correct number of times.
 - ii. Skips/leaps
 1. Most students with mobility differences will not be able to skip and leap. Give them *time* to move the desired pitch or allow them to point to where they should go.
 - a. Example:
 - i. The teacher sings d-m-s and asks the students to repeat the pattern by skipping on the floor staff.
 - ii. Students with mobility difference point to the spot they would jump to.
- c. Body staff
 - i. This technique is used in other approaches that are useful during rhythmic solfege.
 - ii. Each part of the body represents a solfege syllable (if using moveable do) or scale degree number (if using fixed do)
 - iii. The students/musicians move their hands on their bodies to show the pitch instead of moving on a floor staff.
 - iv. Suggested body staff:
 1. Do-knees
 2. Re-thighs
 3. Mi-hips
 4. Fa-chest
 5. Sol-shoulders
 6. La-eyebrows
 7. Ti-top of the head
 8. Do'-hand on the top of the head
 9. Low so,-toes
 10. Low la,-shins

Thank you for attending this workshop at the AES Spring 2023 workshop. For more information or to contact me, please email me at Jason.jones@utrgv.edu.

Sincerely,

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