

Herta Hirmke-Toth, Vienna 2021

Eurhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic settings

Historical development and the implementation in the study for Music and Movement Education / Rhythmics at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

Translated by: Hannes Taljaard

Jaques-Dalcroze (1921, 71) already emphasised the importance of eurhythmics in "Heilpädagogik" and hoped, that the "music healing cure" would one day triumph.

Maria (Mimi) Scheiblauber is of particular importance, who, largely based on the movement, shaped Heilpädagogik in Eurhythmics and, through her humanistic thinking, certainly prepared an essential basis for the development of inclusion.

1. Historical development

- *Emile Jacques Dalcroze* emphasised the curative aspect of eurhythmics and called arrhythmia a 'disease' (1921, 63).
- *Mimi Scheiblauber*, his student, developed the therapeutic pedagogical way of working with eurhythmics. She held numerous therapeutic education courses in Austria.
- **Hellerau School for Rhythm, Music and Physical Education (1919-1925):** *Alexander Sutherland Neill* taught children with behavioural problems at the International Division.
- **School Hellerau-Laxenburg (1925-1938):** *August Aichorn*, psychoanalyst, taught educational philosophy, and argued that psychoanalytic knowledge should be made usable for pedagogy. *Melitta Kosterlitz*, taught rhythmics and gymnastics and looked after children with educational difficulties together with Aichorn. She held rhythmic lessons in Biedermannsdorf for children with disabilities.
- **Academy of Music and Performance Arts Vienna (1959-1970):** the course *Introduction to remedial Education* was compulsory for all students.
- **University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (1970-1998)** The compulsory course mentioned above was followed by *Rhythmics in Special Education*, led by *Margit Schneider*.
- **University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (1998--):** anchoring and expanding *Rhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education* (*Herta Hirmke-Toth, Helga Neira Zugasty, Christoph Falschlunger, Sophie Kindermann, Teresa Leonhard*)

2. Specialising in Eurhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic Education

When students specialise in this field of study, they are prepared for professional contexts, while social developments (the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) are taken into account. Theoretical and practical courses are balanced. This shows their interdependence, and encourages students into critical reflection and debate. Cooperation with schools and other institutions affords real-world learning and teaching experiences,

and gives insight into institutional structures, specific objectives and working methods. Interdisciplinary experiences broaden the professional perspectives and competences with regard to the artistic-pedagogical education of the students and awaken the understanding for the dimensions of diversity, inclusion and variety.

Consideration of the personal interests and previous experiences of students is essential for this specialisation, when choosing professionally oriented internships and when making connections between theoretical, methodological and didactic basics.

The artistic-pedagogical way of working in the field of study (Rhythmik/MB = Rhythmik/Musik und Bewegung) makes it possible that all participants, in accordance with their talents and through the inclusive approach, to be supported and promoted in their personality development within the context of social conditions.

3. A more detailed description

From its inception, eurhythmics was anchored in both art and education. In the professional training, working with people with disabilities has received attention since the 1920s. The change in the educational system, as well as the paradigm shift in special education in the 1960s, led to the introduction of courses in eurhythmics at the then University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna in 1972/1973. After the transformation of art colleges into universities in 2002, inclusive and special needs education was anchored also in the Master programme in Rhythmik/MB at the mdw.

3.1 The Bachelor Programme

All students in this programme complete the following courses:

- Introduction to inclusive and special education
- Observation in inclusive and therapeutic education

In these courses, theoretical basics are connected to observations of eurhythmics sessions in inclusive classes and in therapeutic education, in schools and therapeutic institutions.

For students who are more interested, it is possible to specialise, and then the following courses are also taken:

- Didactics of eurhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education
- Teaching practice with analysis of lessons: eurhythmics in inclusive and remedial education 1,2,3

The following courses are optional, and can be followed at the Institute for Music Therapy:

- Child and adolescent psychiatry
- Child psychosomatics
- Paediatrics

Didactics of eurhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education deals with lesson goals, methods and planning, lesson structure in heterogeneous groups, for people with disabilities and of different ages and talents. Theory and practice are put in interaction: holistic support offers, offers of differentiated learning, tasks that stimulate and promote the development for people with difference competencies of action are in interactions with the experiences of inclusive and therapeutic practice.

Teaching practice with analysis of lessons: eurythmics in inclusive and remedial education 1,2,3 takes greater account of the individual interests and inclinations of the individual students. Students can choose from two or three individual institutions where they will gain professional experience in their fields: integrated kindergarten, integrated elementary school, new secondary school, institute for the blind, child and youth psychiatry, institute for the deaf, ZIS, nursing home and home for refugees. Students are also encouraged to take internships at other institutions on their own. Through this flexible design, changes in society are taken into account in a way that corresponds to the requirements associated with a subject-specific education.

The defined goals of the teaching practice 1 2 and 3, discussed, below should not be seen as a hierarchic structure. Goals are oriented towards the circumstances and requirements of the group and the participants as well as the possibilities and previous experience of the students:

- Practice 01: consideration of different requirements and needs of the participants in the planning and implementation of the eurythmics units.
- Practice 02: recognising rhythm as an opportunity for personality development in inclusive groups and for children with sensory and physical impairments.
- Practice 03: observation, reflection and implementation of individual support in groups or in individual work, taking into account the specific symptoms and life situations of participants.

Elective courses involving more teaching practice, 04 (2 hours) and 05 (1 hour), provide further in-depth professional practice and are open – space permitting – to interested Rhythmik/MB students who are specialising in other fields as well as for students in other study programmes.

Each practice (or internship) involves getting to know the subject, its specific tasks, objectives and approaches. These interdisciplinary experiences lead to the broadening and differentiation of perspectives, and provide insights into future professional fields. Information about the lives and the educational biographies of the participants contributes to a better understanding and a participant-centred planning of eurythmic sessions. Students plan and present sessions independently and receive supervision that accompanies the sessions, supervision that is individually adapted according to prior knowledge and experience. Building on this structure, the following competencies are addressed:

- Analysis of and reflection on group dynamics in eurythmic sessions
- Recognising the abilities of people with special needs
- Recognising and promoting the specific abilities of people with special needs
- Consideration and planning of support strategies through eurythmics
- Specific promotion of the abilities of people with special needs
- Individual support for individual participants through eurythmics, taking the group into account

During the analysis of and reflection on the eurythmic sessions, students can discuss the process, intention, group dynamics; the use of music, materials, voice/language; the instructions, and problems – all according to their needs. Dialogue is employed for exchange, suggestions, observations and hints. The discussion of questions such as migration, how to deal with traumatised children, inclusive teaching, support of participants with specific disabilities, support for highly gifted children, social learning, dealing with difficult behaviour and psychological disorders, takes place according to the needs and composition of the group, and are brought into connection with theory. It is also essential for the supervising teachers to analyse particularly effective teaching sequences and behaviour during eurhythmics sessions: recognising one's own potential and abilities, and understanding and justifying successful work leads to job satisfaction. Debriefings are conducted in a spirit of partnership, and in a meaningful culture of mistakes and they are meant to support students in their teaching experiences and their development in self-confident and critical teachers.

Students work increasingly more on inclusive and therapeutic topics for the Bachelor theses.

3.2 The Master programme

Students are enabled to further professionalise for their careers. In addition to the compulsory courses, one extra module must be completed.

Rhythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education can be taken by all students who have not specialised in this field during the Bachelor programme. This basic module includes:

- Didactics of eurythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education
- Teaching practice with analysis of lessons: eurythmics in inclusive and remedial education

The following courses are optional:

- Child and adolescent psychiatry
- Child psychosomatics
- Paediatrics

The advanced module can also be selected additionally: *Teaching practice with analysis of lessons: eurythmics in inclusive and remedial education*

The module *Therapeutic rhythmics in therapeutic occupational fields* is intended exclusively as a further consolidation for those who have specialised during the Bachelors programme, or who have completed the basic and advanced module in the Master programme. It includes the following modules:

Internship: Therapeutic rhythmics

Optional

- Medical basics for music therapists
- Child psychosomatics
- Child and adolescent psychiatry 1,2
- Introduction to psychotherapy for music therapists 1
- Developmental psychology 1

Since 2003 students have completed the Master programme; of these 32 students have chosen inclusive and therapeutic topics for their Master theses.

3.3 Free electives

Possibilities for learning about this field of study is also offered through free elective courses:

- Introduction to inclusive and special education
- Didactics of eurythmics in inclusive and therapeutic education 1,2
- Didactics of situative, creative and inclusive musicing 1,2
- Teaching practice with analysis of lessons: eurythmics in inclusive and remedial education 1,2
- Praxis with analysis of lessons: rhythmic in inclusive and therapeutic education 4 'Ohrenklang'
- Artistic performance in inclusive, interdisciplinary context 'Ohrenklang' 1,2
- Classic ensemble 'ClassicAll' 1,2

The artistic-pedagogical and scientifically oriented study of Rhythmik/MB with its variety of specialisations and electives, prepares students for the varied requirements of the artistic, pedagogical and therapeutic professional fields, taking into account social challenges and dimensions of diversity.

3.4. Actual development (BA-Curriculum 2022)

The Curricula of the Bachelor- and Masterstudy still follow the actual changes in society, politics, pedagogy and arts. 2022 a new BA-Curriculum with small changes also in the field of inclusion started in Vienna. 2023 the new MA-Curriculum will be finished.

Excerpts from the new BA-Curriculum in relation to inclusion, Heilpädagogik and therapy <https://www.mdw.ac.at/studienplaene/?stNR=8483&stArt=cur> (15.01.2023):

§ 1 Subject of the study programme/Preamble:

Rhythmics is a transdisciplinary subject area in which, based on the interaction of music and movement, individual creative potentials are developed and learning processes are set in motion. In view of the constantly changing cultural and socio-political present, this subject area opens up perspectives on the integration of artistic and pedagogical action and design.

§ 2 Qualification profile

(1) Study concept:

The programme includes teaching in the following areas:

(...) Inclusion and diversity (in the narrower and broader sense, in relation to the dimensions of diversity, with a view to rights and needs, and including vulnerable and marginalised persons (groups), with the objectives: Sensitisation, differentiation in methodology and didactics as well as accessibility). (...)

§ 5 Duration, scope and structure of the degree programme

(4) Deepening specialisation:

The specialisation "Rhythmics in Inclusive Education and Heilpädagogik" sensitises and enables students to work with people with disabilities and other individual limitations of physical or mental health. It imparts methodological-didactic specialist knowledge and prepares students for work in inclusive settings and in occupational fields of Heilpädagogik, as well as in the therapeutic field through practical and scientific consolidation.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license, which means that the text may be remixed, built upon and be distributed, provided credit is given to the author. For details go to: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Pictures which are used in this publication thanks to the courtesy of a third party may not be re-used independently from (parts of) the text of this publication despite the Creative Commons license. Permission from the rights holder is required in this case. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Universität der Künste Berlin