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Efficacy of Integrated Physical Education and Music Culture Instruction in the First Cycle of Elementary Education

Extended summary

The aim of this paper is to investigate the efficiency of a methodological model that would enable pupils to be more successful at acquiring the learning content related to traditional folk dances and develop their sense for music rhythm more efficiently by integrating physical education and music education. The main motive that initiated the empirical research in this paper was the inconsistency between the Physical Education curriculum and Music Education curriculum regarding the content related to folk dances, as it is difficult for students to adopt this content, if it is not implemented in an integrative approach, but rather within each subject individually. The stated facts justify our effort to examine the integrative interdependence of folk dances and their influence on the development of a sense of musical rhythm at a younger school age. Experimental method with two parallel groups (EG –experimental group and CG – control group) was used in the research. The experimental program was created based on the recommended content related to traditional folk dances covered in the school subjects Physical Education and Music Education in the first cycle of primary education. The specific nature and innovation of this program is reflected in the fact that an integrative model of teaching folk dances, which is not usually applied in our schools, is introduced into the physical education and music education teaching process. The structure of the lesson covering the folk dances topic was defined with the integrative learning model and included the following phases: motivational part, which included the solving of certain tasks in order to master and repeat the knowledge and use it as an introduction for a new learning unit; vocal preparation (students

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singing to a famous folk dance); analyzing the literary text of a new folk dance; learning about a new folk dance by musical units; mastering the learned folk dance; learning folk dance steps; performing the learned folk dance steps. An integrated approach was applied with the EG in covering the content related to traditional folk dances, while the same content was covered in the traditional way with the CG. Testing technique was used to determine the level of development of the sense for music rhythm in both groups, whereas a test for determining the development of the sense for music rhythm served as the research instrument, which consisted of the following subtests: the students' ability to accurately reproduce the assigned children's folk counting rhyme, the students' ability to accept and maintain the changed tempo of the learned children's folk counting rhyme, the students' ability to reproduce the assigned rhythmic motif by clapping, and the ability to keep the rhythm with two hands. The obtained results indicate that the pupils in the experimental group, where the integrated methodological approach was used, show a higher level of the developed sense for music rhythm than pupils in the other group. It should be highlighted that the results confirmed the correlation between music abilities and the movement technique in the folk dances, indicating that the sense for music rhythm should be developed in primary school as early as possible, which will ensure good results at later stages of participants' life. With the help of the related learning contents, this paper has combined two courses from our education system and thus provided guidelines for innovating the education practice, i.e., for finding effective methodological approaches to encourage the development of a sense of musical rhythm in students. The findings on the effects of the applied experimental program in Physical Education and Music Education lessons at younger school age prove that the integrative approach should be used more frequently in the teaching process, despite certain organizational and material limitations that our schools face.

Keywords: physical education, music education, music culture, music rhythm, integrated instruction, traditional folk dance

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