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My experiences in teaching Music and Dance Education groups online

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- Age - Kindergarden and first school year**

1. Music and dance education online?

In general, one can teach every music and dance education theme but has to make some modifications to the usual lessons.

I use the conference software „zoom“ to meet online with the children. You can use it with cell phone, tablet or usual PCs. It is easy to use. The children have a meeting ID and each group has its own password.

You can choose Gallery view so everyone can see the other. As Host, it is recommended to mute all participants` microphones, otherwise it is hard to understand each other. But I open the conference half an hour before it starts, to give participants the opportunity to see, meet and talk to each other and get in contact. If you have to teach one group after the other, you can manage that by sending participants to a virtual waiting room, so you can teach others in the meantime. In the first lesson of course, parents should be with the children to help them use the software, but it will take only a short time and the children are able to deal with it on their own. You find great tutorials on youtube about using Zoom

2. Special challenges when working online with groups

One of the challenges working online with a group is being alone in your living room and having to create a kind of group feeling through a screen. So, in my opinion it is very important to keep the children in „action mode“ and interact as much as possible. Again and again I ask questions and let single children answer in front of the group if they like to. I let them do music exercises, quizzes, dance moves, etc., alone with the others watching. If you teach older children who are already able to read and write you can use the Chat function. So you can give tasks and everybody can write an answer. I try always to have an eye on everybody`s actions and give positive feedback.

Online one cannot make „audible“ music together. So one main aspect of music teaching is missing. A paradox. But everyone can play by him/herself muted with the teacher. If you have a good internet connection and choose „original sound“ in zoom, you may play in time with one pupil. And you can listen to each person playing alone.

3. How to adapt contents of regular Music and Dance education lessons for online teaching?

As not every child has instruments or a large space to move at home, I try to adapt the content I

want to teach for simple materials that everybody has at home. For example, instead of Orff Instruments they have to use kitchen materials or body percussion for rhythm exercises; instead of xylophones I use good old solmisation or „fingerpiano“.

Dances for groups have to be modulated to single, duo or small family versions that can be danced in a family circle or alone. So I always have to question myself: what do I want to teach with that dance?

In my regular groups, for example, I do many circle-building games. Children love them but I cannot do these things online and be creative.

But you can do movement games or stop and go, for example. Instead of hoops to mark spots on the floor children can use cushions or chairs.

One always has to ask oneself „what exists in every household and is very easy to access“? I found it useful to use some little things and materials going along with the theme and small enough to be shown while sitting in front of the screen. This makes a friendlier atmosphere and catches the eyes of the children. They stay better with you if you use things like that instead of just talking. And you cannot use your body or the room to show what you mean in the same way one can do that in „real groups“. In my practical video example I use a small witch and her clock made out of paper. In regular lessons I would use different walls of the room and let the children run there to show me the „right time“ (you will understand when watching the example :-)). And I would play the witch myself.

4. Practical video example:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8sjwci2wtqnf80/live%20mitschnitt%20mfe.mp4?dl=0>

Timewitch Adelheid:

Adelheid is a witch who can change time depending on whether or not she likes what she does - in this case she wants time to go more slowly, or if she has to do unpleasant work - she wants time to move faster.

Half notes - time goes more slowly

Quarter notes - normal time

Eight notes - fast time

She has got a big clock she enchants to change time:

The red clock is normal time

Green - fast time

Blue - slow time

- There is an Timewitch-Song about Adelheid we learn to sing.
- By fortune I got hold of her wand and can enchant the children to move in the named times.(Other enchanting games can go along with that for sure.)
- The witch enchants her clock - children clap the „time“ or play it on instruments.
- We learn a witch dance with broom (visible or invisible). Again the moves are danced in the three known „times“. We can accompany the Timewitch-song on instruments or with body percussion in the three „times“.

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