

## **CITATION**

Colley, B. (1987). A comparison of syllabic methods for improving rhythm literacy.  
*Journal of Research in Music Education*, 35, 221-235.

## **ABSTRACT**

**PURPOSE:** “to determine the relative effectiveness of three recitation systems on improving the rhythm-reading ability of elementary school children.”

-three systems were taken from Gordon, Kodaly and the “word” method.

-the three component skills examined were recognition, dictation, and performance

**RATIONALE:** Methods of teaching rhythm less studied than tonal systems. When studied, there is little research regarding their efficacy. Have compared alternative methods (kinesthetic/verbal) to traditional fraction approaches, but not to each other. Author discusses research that has identified the component skills that make up rhythm-reading ability.

## **DESIGN AND PROCEDURE:**

**Sample:** 160 second- and third-grade children from two schools in southern Maine.

Eight intact classes, six at school one, two at school two.

**Variables:** Three experimental conditions were Gordon, Kodaly (modified), and Word approaches. Control group received no rhythm instruction. Rhythm-reading ability was measured by testing three component skills; recognition, dictation, performance.

**Instrument:** An author-designed battery of three 20-point tests. No reliability given.

**Procedures:** Students from the two classes in school two served as the control group, and the six classes at school one were randomly assigned to one of three experimental

conditions (both grades in each). After taking the pretest, all experimental groups were taught by the researcher once a week for a total of nine 35- minute lessons. All groups were then given an identical test as a posttest.

**Analysis:** Recognition and dictation posttest results were analyzed using the pretest scores as a covariate because of initial differences between groups. Performance test results used the gain scores analyzed in a one-way ANOVA. Post hoc Newman-Keuls tests used gain scores as the basis for analysis for all tests.

**FINDINGS:** Significant differences between the control group and the experimental groups for all three tests. Post hoc tests revealed differences in recognition between Kodaly and both the Gordon and Word groups; in dictation between all three treatment groups; in performance between Word and the other two.

**INTERPRETATIONS:** Methods played a significant role in rhythm reading ability. Word method held interest better. Three factors influenced performance: 1) ease of recall, 2) reference point for metrical stress, 3) differentiation between duple and triple. Future research should focus on more method comparisons and a hierarchy of rhythm pattern difficulty for sequencing instruction.