SUMMARY

This study examines the impact of introducing social dance in the primary music curriculum. More specifically, it examines whether social dance is an effective method of instruction in enhancing the rhythmic skills of Primary Four school students. The cha-cha, a particular branch of social dance, was used for the purpose of this study. Following closely to the objectives of the recommended text, *Tune-In*, and Singapore’s Ministry of Education primary music syllabus guidelines, the rhythmic concepts of tempo, beat, anacrusis, creating rhythmic phrases, clapping and conducting were tested.

A two-group-pre-post-test design involving a control and experimental group was used. The control group was taught using the recommended text, *Tune-In*, while the experimental group was taught using the cha-cha method of instruction. A pretest and posttest consisting of six sections, each testing the rhythmic concepts mentioned in the first paragraph, was used as the measurement tool. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and t-tests.

Findings show that both the textbook method and dance method of instruction were effective in enhancing the overall rhythmic skills of the students. A breakdown of analysis of the various sections showed that students for both groups fared significantly better in the sections of clapping, conducting and creating three bars of 3/4 and 4/4 beat rhythmic phrases. However, students exposed to the cha-cha method posted a higher increase in percentage improvement in the practical sections of clapping and conducting, compared to the control group.

As such, it is proposed that a structured dance programme be implemented as part of the music curriculum to teach rhythmic skills in the primary music syllabus.