

# The link between CML and 'Initiation in teaching a foreign language to young children'



## Foreword

Scientific research (e.g. by Professor Stucchi Natale Adolfo, Erik Scherder, Rebecca Schaefer, Gottfried Schlaug, Ben van Cranenburgh, Artur Jaschke...) has shown that music is a very important link in learning at all levels. Music stimulates the cooperation between the left and right hemispheres of the brain and also has a motivating effect.

For the above reasons, I can only applaud the fact that about thirty years ago CML (= Children's Music Laboratory) was founded by Elena Enrico, a music teacher from Italy. Meanwhile, this method is successfully applied in several countries. It is a method in which an accredited trainer, TOGETHER WITH THE PARENT, gives children the opportunity to develop harmoniously through music. The teacher offers elements that the parent can work with at home. The fact that this improves the relationship between the two is a nice bonus. CML not only prepares the child in a playful way to play an instrument later on, but also to be stronger in life through a harmonious personality.



Elena Enrico, foundress of CML

# Why did I choose this topic?

I have always been interested in pedagogy and didactics. That is why I chose to train as a teacher when I was 18 years old. I always tried to keep abreast of innovations and schooled at home and abroad. About ten years after my training at graduate school, I specialised in teaching French to young children.

Meanwhile, something was changing in our family that determined our subsequent careers. My husband Harold started taking a Suzuki course in violin. I saw him undergo a complete metamorphosis along the way. Never before had he been so enthusiastic and committed. He devoured the book 'Nurtured by Love - The Classic Approach to Talent Education' by Shinichi Suzuki and then a few more books when otherwise he rarely got beyond a comic strip. He began to talk passionately about his teaching and more and more people came to him with their children for lessons. My interest was piqued and we chatted for hours about what drove him. Then I realised that everything he was doing was completely parallel to what I had discovered in teaching a foreign language to young children in recent years. All the basic principles corresponded.

In the meantime, I became more and more embittered by the situation in Belgian education. As teachers, we are forced to do a number of things that create unnecessary planning burdens and the current methods are not effective with today's children. (The more restrictions are imposed on us, the worse the Belgian pupil does at European level. ) I ended up in burnout. After a few months of sitting at home and looking for how to organise my life differently, I ended up in music education by chance (although I don't believe in coincidences). After a few years, I was able to work full-time and through a confluence of circumstances, I came into contact with CML. As soon as I started that course, all the pieces of the puzzle fell together. My enthusiasm returned, I saw again that thread that had already run through my life several times and I felt at home. Because both this method and the approach I use to teach French language initiation do yield success experiences, I cannot remain silent. In my thesis, I hope to convince doubters or teachers facing burnout that things can be done differently. But even better than reading these writings is witnessing with your own eyes what this learning process does to children. The twinkling eyes, the smiling little faces, the hoots when you appear on the playground, their "Oh dear, is the lesson over already, teacher?" after an hour of intensive teaching prove that this works



# Some common principles in CML and language initiation

Whence the success of CML, why am I such a fan of it? It is founded on some key principles that I support and that other reputable people also uphold.

## Start offering formation as early as possible

### (Child brain development + consequence of starting learning time)

Small children are like sponges. They absorb everything they hear and see. In our heads, we have a kind of sound filter. When a small child grows up in a certain environment, it stores all the sounds heard in that environment. The moment it is confronted with other languages, other sounds are added. At a certain age, everything is stored and it becomes very difficult to distinguish sounds one has never heard before. Our brain, as it were, sifts the entire flow of sounds and keeps the recognisable sounds.

This is why it is so important for small children to come into contact with as wide a spectrum of languages as possible. Their brains are still much more elastic, so they have more chances than adults to distinguish, remember and reproduce foreign sounds.

I can illustrate this with the following example: since 29 April 2022, we have taken in a 20-year-old Ukrainian refugee. Yaroslava already made several attempts to get us to pronounce words in Ukrainian, but because we don't know certain sounds in Dutch, we hardly manage to reproduce them correctly. Should our four grandchildren (one toddler and three preschoolers) stay in a Ukrainian family for a few months and only hear that language, there is a greater chance that they would be able to pronounce the words correctly.

I am convinced that children who are exposed to music (performed properly) from an early age and who are also given many opportunities to sing are much more likely to sing in the right tone later on. My conviction is based on the experience I have of teaching students. For six years, I have had dozens of students in my class every year who want to study music (guitar – singing - solfège - harmony). A small number of them attended music school for several to many years as children, and the majority are coming into contact with music for the first time and have had few opportunities to sing. Among the latter group, a lot of problems occur when singing: fear of having one's voice heard, not being able to intone correctly (even when others sing along), having a very limited vocal range. I also notice a difference when listening to music: not being able to hear whether a melody rises or falls, not hearing whether a note is low or high, not being able to distinguish one instrument when an orchestra is playing, not being able to detect a structure in a piece of music (e.g. ABA form)...

I also attend primary schools and notice a significant difference in terms of singing between groups that never sing in class and others that do so daily with a musical teacher. The latter are more confident musically and can sing much better in tune.

## Involve parents in children's learning process

More and more people are seeing the importance of parent-child interaction at a very young age as a stimulus in learning language, including the language of music. The French-language video below illustrates this:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ams43i\\_m0rg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ams43i_m0rg)

[La capacité phénoménale d'apprentissage des bébés - Développement et comportement  
7 Aug 2012 Naître et Grandir.com - Une initiative de la Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon]

*(This video explains why parents' interaction with their babies stimulates brain development. In the first three years of life, the brain volume of young children triples. Therefore, it is very important to excite and stimulate them just at that time. )*

A good example of initiatives in that area are: Lullaby (Elena Enrico - Italy)



and Babelut (Sarah Verhulst - Belgium)



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7o1zq\\_6P4M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7o1zq_6P4M) (this video shows an excerpt from the Babelut lab with Sarah Verhulst)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R6xeVb26BQ> (interview on 1 March 2013 about the musical immersion of children as young as 0 in a musical bath during a workshop in Neerpelt)

Sarah offers the following 4 tips to encourage musical development in your child:

- Sing with your child, even if you are convinced you cannot sing. Use your voice. All the parameters of music are contained in it: melody, rhythm, timbre, intonation, dynamics...
- Stimulate auditory by letting children use other senses: feel what you hear, see what you hear: e.g. Do you hear staccato notes in a piece of music? Give pricks to the baby's back. Do you hear legato? Rub his body with long lines.
- Establish musical communication together. Interact with your child and try to challenge them. Do vocalises or say rhythmic things in nonsense language and let it respond or imitate you. There is no such thing as wrong imitations. Pick up on what they offer.
- Offer the child music to listen to: different genres and styles! Don't think they are too small to understand certain music. There is no need to modify music because it is for small children. A lot of music is changed to be more appealing to little ones, but it doesn't have to be.

The best age to learn foreign languages due to the brain's enormous plasticity: preschoolers and first graders. The article below explains why.

[file:///C:/Downloads/Chapter\\_MeertalismChildrensplay\\_Peters\\_preprint.pdf](file:///C:/Downloads/Chapter_MeertalismChildrensplay_Peters_preprint.pdf)

When children are exposed to foreign languages from a very young age, they not only learn foreign languages faster, but also learn their mother tongue better and also perform better in other areas. This is why EU education ministers advocate learning at least two foreign languages from a very early age.

<https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/early-childhood-education-and-care/early-childhood-education-and-care-initiatives>

## Be positive! Inspiring personalities

### Shinichi Suzuki (Japan: violinist and violin teacher 1898 - 1998)

It is not difficult to teach a very talented student and achieve success with them. It is a different matter to teach a child with a disability or little talent to play the violin. Because Suzuki was convinced that talent is not just hereditary and because he developed very specific didactics to teach children to play the violin, he achieved unexpected and often miraculous results. His example of sustained belief in every child's potential inspires me and many people around the world.

His following quotes are very important to me.

- The teachings given to pupils have **value also in life**
- When we **practice continuously, we will acquire many skills**
- Our children are not born **geniuses**. They were **educated and trained by parents** who had made their child's education the scope of their lives.
- **Every child can do well: it all depends on the educational methods** applied from the moment of birth.
- The goal of **providing a child with music lessons** is to give him **a means of liberating the child's infinite potential**.
- **The brain of a baby** is capable of easily **assimilating the largest quantity of things**.
- We need **to adapt our education to the different phases of the growth** of children.
- **The lack of stimulation** in an environment **is dangerous** for the child.
- **The experiences undergone prior to three years of age** comprise the **foundation of our thoughts and our current behaviour**.
- **Repetition** is the best way **to stimulate the child's interest**.
- **Concentration is the base of all higher qualities**.
- The little child finds pleasure in repeating - this phase is crucial to give **exercises of memory**.

- We must **observe children and learn** from them.
- **Education is the daily life we live with our children.** We cannot shift our responsibilities to others or to the school. **The first and most important teachers of the children are the parents.** They educate their children to surpass themselves.
- First we teach children **to perform the techniques correctly.** Afterwards their execution becomes **spontaneously and natural**



### **Maria Montessori (Italy and the Netherlands: physician and educator: Italy 1878 - 1952)**

Maria Montessori was born near Rome. The family moved to Rome where Maria went to study. This was very unusual at the time: after all, girls did not study! In 1896, Maria Montessori became the first female doctor in Italy. Between 1898 and 1904, she worked with **very difficult-to-learn children**. She came to believe **that for these children, pedagogical care was more important than medical care alone**. She was successful with her method and also successfully applied it in mainstream education. She later went on to study psychology and pedagogy. In 1907, she founded her first 'Casa de Bambini', deliberately called casa, house, and not school. Based on experiences in dealing with children, Maria Montessori developed her educational method. Her success created worldwide interest in her educational principles, which are applied in Montessori schools. From 1911, she concentrated entirely on the further elaboration and dissemination of her pedagogical principles. She travelled all over the world and eventually settled in the Netherlands. She wrote several works and publications and gave lectures. She died in Noordwijk on 6 May 1952.

Maria Montessori's vision with regard to upbringing and education can be described in one term: the 'self-education' of and by children, the 'path to independence'. **Montessori believes that the child leads himself in his development towards adulthood. The adults around the child have the task of supporting and enabling this process by designing the so-called 'prepared environment' and offering the right challenges to learning at the right time.** In doing so, every child has a need for independence that he or she expresses by saying, 'Help me do it myself!'

(source: <https://www.montessorischoolvenray.nl/main.php?id=98959>)



In an interview, she says the children are entitled to a good education and that she actually wants to educate the parents as well.

<https://vimeo.com/223930517>

(source: Wikipedia: listening clip: Radio interview Maria Montessori by Gustav Czopp in 1938)

The good or bad outcome of our society depends on how our children are brought up - radio campaigns: 'croisade pour les droits sociaux des enfants' - The children are our chance to save and positively develop our civilisation - Upbringing and education must recognise what a child's needs are at any given time and respond to them by providing the right environment and materials.



<https://verkenjegeest.com/tien-beste-citaten-maria-montessori/>

I also heard the following quotes from this wise lady - albeit not always literally - during our CML training.

- *"All unnecessary help is an obstacle to development."*
- *"Development takes the form of striving for ever greater independence. It is like an arrow released from the bow, flying straight, fast and sure."*
- *"The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say: the children are now working as if I don't exist."*
- *"Education from the beginning of life could really change the present and future of society."*
- *"The best instruction is the instruction that needs the fewest words to explain the task."*
- *"If you criticise a child too much, he will learn to judge. If you compliment the child regularly, he will learn to appreciate."* It is a very clear recognition that allows us to see that, ultimately, the child will reflect what the adult has to offer him. Parents are role models for their children.

Also in CML training, we learn that parents guide their children, but the latter should have as many opportunities as possible to discover this for themselves, without being pushed.

In a school I occasionally visited, there was a negative atmosphere. Always there was a child standing in the corner or a teacher was shouting because someone was doing something out of place. It depressed me instantly. I talked about it with the management and some teachers. They focused last year on positive pedagogy to prevent bullying behaviour and after a year, I clearly notice the difference. Teachers are under tremendous pressure because of curricula, demands from parents or the ministry, corona measures... Some children don't get enough attention at home or have an unpleasant home situation. It is important that we are all aware of this and try not to let it get us down. Keep seeing the positive: a child can sometimes do much more than you think.

### **Gionvanni Bosco (Italy: priest 1815 - 1888)**

The importance of positive pedagogy has fascinated me since my early college years.

My brother was already school-weary when he was a young adolescent. My parents sent him to a Don Bosco school and we saw him change visibly. What had happened? He came into contact with educators who looked at what he **WOULD** be able to do and did not focus on his shortcomings.

They

did not see problems, but opportunities for growth. Because others believed in him, he himself began to see that he was worth more than what he thought about himself.

I have read several books and watched a film about Giovanni Bosco. This saint (from Asti, yes!) is, in my opinion, one of the greatest pedagogues of his time. He managed to convince hundreds of children and young people (mostly orphans or neglected) to attend school or training with him. At that time and under those circumstances, that was no mean feat. His secret? He was a passionate acrobat and musician and... moreover, very optimistic in character. His evangelism was never boring or overly moralising. He entertained everyone to attract attention. When a lot of people were gathered, he told them what he had to say. He gave children a lot of independence and said he needed them. They were not second-class citizens, but felt useful to achieve a higher goal together with others. He could win over all those people (even kings, popes, noblemen...) with a positive approach. He proposed a goal and a plan of action and inspired by always remaining hopeful, even with children whose children were thought to be idle. Below you can see some of his statements. To me, they are very important, not only in terms of CML or language initiation, but in relation to teaching in general.



### **PARENTING IS ...**

- giving young people opportunities for growth and guidance.
- letting children play the leading role.
  
- involve parents as the most direct co-players.
- count on the support of friends, family, teachers, youth workers and classmates.
- tailor, trust and gradually let go.
- adapt to the concrete person in a concrete situation.
- set boundaries.
- learning step by step to be free, independent and responsible.
- push horizons.
- testify that life is worth living.
- show that they are meaningful to others as a person.
- recognise, acknowledge and learn to deal with vulnerability in a valuable way.

<https://www.donbosco.be/opvoedingsproject>



## Glenn Doman (USA: physiotherapist 1919 - 2013)



<https://gdbaby.com.sg/>

**Glenn Doman** was a pioneer in the field of motor development. I didn't know the man until we had to read his book 'Children with a brain injury' in the CML course. That was a real eye -opener. Even though I don't have much medical knowledge or a pronounced scientific interest, the book fascinated me from beginning to end. Above all, it is written with hope and laced with humour. The approach in CML shows many similarities to what I read with Glenn Doman. In the 1970s, many miracles were performed in children with brain injuries... by the parents! What I remember:

- Glenn's team gave **therapy for years with no results**. Why? They treated the children a certain way because that was how they had been taught in school. Then they made a startling discovery: children with brain injuries who had not received therapy seemed to progress faster than those who had received therapy.  
How did this come about? They were put on the ground and had to discover and experience how to propel themselves.
- Link to our music education:  
**Some people did not undergo training in a music school and yet are very good musicians. How is that possible? Firstly**, they are highly motivated and keep in mind the goal they want to achieve. They observe videos via YouTube and mimic them countless times. They never get tired of practising this until they master it.  
**Why is it that we have been trying to provide solid music education for so many years and so many children lose motivation and drop out? Why is it that so many children know and can do so little after their education?**  
We stuff them with theoretical knowledge. They have neither physically experienced it nor tested it against practice. For instance, they learn to read rhythms without tapping them. They learn scales, but have never felt from their bodies how these can climb and descend. They learn about flats, but never saw or felt how they really pushed a note down. This is a big gap that CML is trying to fill. Cognitive knowledge is literally felt first.
- The researchers waited until a child indicated SELF that he was ready to learn to walk. Only then was there a chance of success.
- People studied how to reopen blocked neurological pathways. Here, repetition, intensity and duration of stimuli are paramount. Also in CML, we work a lot with repetition of small pieces of learning, movements, exercises...

- Lisa's mum had nevertheless given her daughter who seemingly would never be able to move that opportunity with resourcefulness, a lot of patience, affirmation and, above all, love! That perseverance and belief in what she was doing had a miraculous effect.
- Nan's programme: not how the child is, but what the family can muster determines the positive course of the programme. Finishing exercises for hours and hours on end!  
There are 2 kinds of families: the first kind see the defective child as a gift and are happy with it, the second kind also love their child but see it as a cross and are less positively motivated. Motivation and self-discipline are indispensable!
- A child needs discipline as much as good food, love and fresh air.
- In the chapter 'Function determines structure', we learn that the sensory and motor pathways - together with their interconnections - make up the brain. This is proven by tests by the brilliant Russian neurosurgeon and neurophysiologist Boris Klossovskii (Moscow): experimental and control group dogs and kittens (slow-turning plateau and more growth in the brain region of the balance organ) and work by genius David Krech (Berkeley): rats raised with deprivation of sensory stimuli versus others in a rich environment: large, intelligent and highly developed brains in the second group. In the CML course, we learned that a learning environment without much variety or stimuli is very bad for students' learning conditions.
- Motivation is not an inherited moral value. Nor is failure always the absence of motivation. It is the other way around: success breeds motivation. Failure destroys motivation. Success leads to motivation which in turn leads to success. Failure brings punishment, which will lack motivation. Punishment and reward are the original motivators. If you do not compare a child's performance to others or to the end result they have to achieve, but rather to what they were able to do the day before, they will do so with enthusiasm. Break down a task into steps and don't confront the child with too big a task. Always be grateful and enthusiastic, respectful and joyful about the difference between then and now. Reward your child with your love and your praise.
- Because parents love their children so much, they are eminently the best caregivers provided they received thorough training on the programme to be followed.

All the above underlined phrases show that there is much similarity between Glenn Doman's findings in neurology and Elena Enrico's maxims in CML, which in turn summarise Eastern educators and masters of certain arts. If we follow these, we can be sure that progress lies ahead.

Having worked in education for 30 years and trained for many years at home and abroad in didactics for children (in the field of language learning), I fully agree. Whether we want to teach a child the language of music or any other language, important factors are the good example set by a parent or teacher, lots of repetition, motivation, perseverance in practising, discipline, movement and visualisation to support, building on success experiences, breaking down difficult subject matter into bite-sized chunks, social contact with peers during the learning process, enthusiasm and faith of the teacher that his pupil will be able to do it.

## Michèle Forestier (France: physiotherapist - date of birth not found)

Moreover, I echo a quote from **Michèle Forestier** who says: "It is not the age at which one learns to step that matters, but rather respecting the different stages to reach steps."



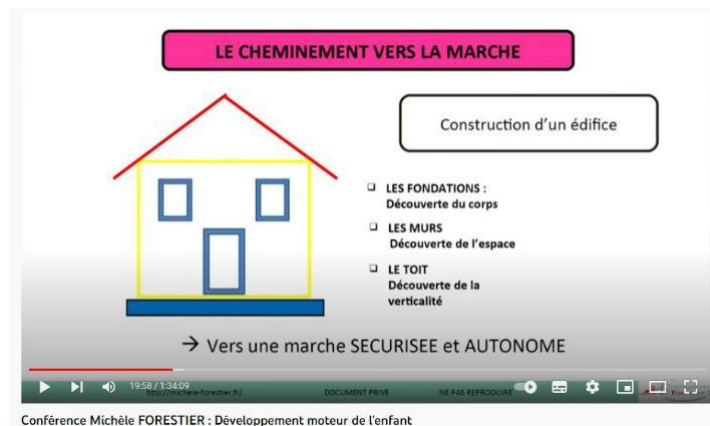
*Text and drawings from Michèle Forestier's book 'De la naissance aux premiers pas' (Editions Érès)*

<http://www.virginievincent-osteo.com/pages/la-marche-pas-a-pas.html>

[Michèle Forestier: développement moteur de l'enfant]

In her interesting presentations, Forestier gives examples of children who have motor problems because they have left phases when learning to walk. For example, if you often put a child who cannot yet walk in a baby walker or a highchair, he or she can run around in it, but there is a good chance that he or she will not be able to walk properly on their own if they have not been given the opportunity to hoist themselves up from the prone position and try to move forward on their own in

all kinds of ways. To get to walking, Forestier identifies the following three stages that need to be gone through. She compares these to building a house:



- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The fundamentals: | Exploring the body    |
| 2. The walls:        | Exploring space       |
| 3. The roof:         | Exploring verticality |

For a similar reason, a learning line has been developed in CML that should be respected. Do not ask a child to do a complicated exercise with a bow (variations with the snail) if he has not first learned how to hold that bow properly. First offer a song to make that has 'keeping balance' as a teaching

point (e.g. Hop hop hop) before expecting a child to stand on one leg for a while during a dance. You don't go down a black slope with a child who has skis on his feet for the first time, do you?

Even when learning a foreign language, you have to respect certain stages. When you want a child to answer a question of yours in French, you can ask that question in different ways. For example, you want to ask which piece of fruit featured in the song you just sang. Before that, you gave the instruction, "Listen carefully! I will sing a song about a piece of fruit. Afterwards, you should be able to say in French which piece of fruit it was about." You show an apple and an orange. "Will it be about 'une pomme' (holding up the apple) or 'une orange' (holding up the orange)?" You sing the song and ask afterwards:

- Easy level: "C'était une pomme (holding up the apple) ou une orange (holding up the orange)? You repeat: Une pomme (showing apple) ou une orange (showing orange)? The child has heard the word several times and has also been given a visual aid that makes the meaning clear. This makes it easier to repeat the correct word. So it only has to repeat your word.
- Intermediate level: "C'était une pomme ou une orange?" (where you show nothing more) The child has to know from memory which name belongs to which piece of fruit. He may well remember the pronunciation of the word because you have just said it.
- Difficult level: "Quel fruit as-tu entendu dans ma chanson?" (showing nothing and giving no choices) The child should remember the correct French name and be able to reproduce it without help.

As a teacher, it is very important that you are aware of the different levels of questioning and the ways you can offer help. This way, you can differentiate optimally when you have children of different levels in your class and make sure they feel safe in the learning process. Just like respecting the stages a child has to go through to learn to step properly, every teacher should make sure not to skip stages in the didactic learning process.

I recently learnt the song 'Au pays des couleurs'. There is a recurring sentence structure: "When I say [colour], you have to... [movement to perform]." Before I start teaching the song, I first teach the colours in different playful ways so that they are very well known. Then I do a game of COMMANDS. The children have to walk around the room. They listen to two commands in French and have to carry them out at the right moment: e.g. *Personne ne bouge!* (Nobody moves - stand still!) and *Marchez!* (Step around!). After that, a command is added each time. Only when they have performed this frequently do we continue. "I say a sentence. Listen for the ending sound. As quickly as possible, call out a colour that rhymes with it." e.g. *Personne ne bouge!* " - Rouge. Or: *Ferme les yeux!* " - Bleu.

<https://youtu.be/9MgBztLydig>

[Art cure project at Ten Parke primary school in Torhout - school year 2021- 2022]

By first inserting some games that add new learning in small steps, the children are afterwards much quicker to memorise the song in a short time. I learned this during my training to teach French and especially at CML: divide an activity into small intermediate steps. Always do preparatory exercises before starting a choreography.

At a summer camp, I taught a song where we accompany ourselves with body percussion. I divided the learning process into smaller pieces: clapping a certain rhythm with different body parts, mimicking sounds, mimicking sounds while clapping a rhythm to it with your body. One group sings a song. The other does the percussion part. Then switch. At the end, some children are able to do both at the same time.

<https://youtu.be/9w5z6-JGKPI>

[La chanson des insectes - based on the following music: Pandoer - French lyrics: Nele Devos - camp Spermaliehoeve Sint-Pieterskapelle - summer 2019]

### **Emmi Pikler (Hungary: paediatrician and educator 1902 - 1984)**

Another lady of stature is **Emmi Pikler**. She had different ideas about baby development than was common in her time. In 1946, she became head of a children's home in Budapest, Lóczy, where she conducted a lot of scientific research. She observed all the children and kept accurate records of how and at what age they were developing. The findings confirmed her pedagogical vision. In 2014, the Pikler Convention was drafted, which sets out the rights of children in childcare. The following advice - which actually applies to babies but also applies to young children - is in line with what CML promotes and what I learned in my language initiation training.



<https://www.24baby.nl/baby/kinderopvang/emmi-pikler-visie/>

**"Name everything you do or are going to do. That way your baby is prepared for what is to come.**

" In my teaching, I have often found that children who show awkward behaviour sometimes do so because they are unsure about what you are going to do and whether they will be able to do it. We can prevent a lot of distress by communicating clearly beforehand.

**"If you observe your baby well, you learn to communicate with him and interaction occurs. "**

When a child makes a comment during class, you may find it disturbing, but you can also try to determine the reason behind this behaviour and do something constructive with it.

During class CML, a little boy had already shown disruptive behaviour several times. I have a suspicion that he has autism or ADHD and that it is very difficult for him to concentrate for a full hour after school. As I was reciting a song, he shouted, "Hey, that's the rhythm presto-presto-lento!" I was at first tempted to admonish him for being disruptive, but nevertheless chose to praise him for

recognising the rhythm. He was proud and followed along well for the rest of the lesson because he wanted to score with me once again through good behaviour.

A few years ago, there were two little boys who constantly disrupted the lesson. They were imitating a little dog and barking at everything I asked and crawling around on all fours. Internally, I was furious. Fortunately, I managed to keep my composure and decided to turn the negative energy into something positive. I asked, "Are you smart little dogs who can also convert music into dog language?" They looked at me in surprise for a moment. They had not expected that reaction. I suggested I show them a rhythm chart and they had to translate it doggy-style. 'Short short short short short' became 'Woof woof woof woof woof' where they crawled forward four steps. 'Very lange' became 'woo-oe-oe-oe-oe', etc. The whole class participated enthusiastically and the two were proud to put their own spin on the lesson. For the rest of the hour, they again joined in vigorously with everything I had prepared.

**"Don't push your child to do something he may not be ready for. "**

During our first training weekend, Marco said that parents should not admonish their child when he does not do something right right away, but help him or just leave him alone. Forcing is out of the question. Each child evolves at its own pace. I believe this is the very best approach, even if it is often contradicted by some teachers: "Well, I would spoil them even more and give in to their whims!" is a common reaction.

The following examples substantiate my view in this.

When I start a French language camp, my first sentence to the children is always, "You MUST NOT join if you don't feel comfortable with it yet, you can also watch first." At the past 21 camps, I have never had a child at the end who did not want to participate or could not do anything during the presentation to the parents. Some children want to observe at the beginning or sit in a corner with their back to the group. When I allow this, I see that after a while they unobtrusively peek at what we are doing. Sometimes it is even just those children who at the end are best able to perform everything flawlessly.

I once observed a lesson in the CML 1 group with Harold. A girl's parent left for some reason and left the child alone with us. I asked if it wanted to join me, but it did not respond. It just sat there and watched everything we did. The next day, the mother said that in her bed, the child had sung all the songs by heart and beautifully in tune. The girl was very excited and wanted to come back again, even though I was under the impression that it had not done anything and had not shown any feelings.



### Sir Ken Robinson (Great Britain: professor, education expert and writer 1950 - 2021)

Robinson was a British author, speaker and arts education consultant for governments, non-profit organisations, educational and cultural institutions. He was best known as an international expert and champion of creativity and innovation in education and business. In February 2006, he delivered an introduction on the need for creativity in education at the TED conference in California that became the best-watched 'TED talk'.



His books are considered standard works in the field of educational innovation. He also emphasised **the importance of creativity in learning**.

I read his book 'The Element'. The element is the point where natural talent meets personal passion. When people are in their element, they are most themselves, most inspired and get the most out of themselves. The book is based on the stories of a wide range of people, from ex-Beatle Paul McCartney to Matt Groening, the creator of The Simpsons, from Meg Ryan to Gillian Lynne and from writer Arianna Huffington to renowned physicist Richard Feynman and others, including business leaders and athletes.



The video below shows that it is not about high grades in school but that there are more forms of intelligence and talents.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbTY>

[Do schools kill creativity? | Sir Ken Robinson]

He said in the interview, "Wherever you go around the world, every education system on earth has the same hierarchy of subjects: at the top are mathematics and languages, then the humanities and at the bottom are the arts.... In reality, we start educating growing children from the waist up. Then

we focus on their heads... What is the purpose of this education? To breed university professors. That is supposedly the pinnacle of what you can achieve as a human being. But what do you usually see in those people? They live in their heads and play off their bodies. They see their bodies as a mode of transport for their heads. **We need a revolution where we value not only the cognitive but also other disciplines. "**

During a French class, I had twins in my class. The girls always had too much energy: they were constantly wobbling on their chairs, their arms went in all directions (usually to the annoyance of their close neighbours), they were constantly blurting out all kinds of things because their tongues worked faster than their brains. That particular lesson, we learned the word 'hélicoptère'. The children repeated it after me to practise proper pronunciation. One of the roguish duo jumped up, twirled one arm around her head, slapped her head and swung her arms down along her legs. I began to get annoyed as she was disturbing the class event for the umpteenth time and wondered what was going on again. I managed to hold back my angry remark for a while and asked, "Why are you doing this?" Her reply: "If I make up motions with it, I can remember it better." Now you should know that these twins were competing in the Belgian dance championships and for them, moving was as important as breathing. Suddenly I remembered a testimony by Sir Ken Robinson in his book "The Element". A woman went to the psychiatrist with her eight-year-old daughter in the 1930s because people at school had said the little one showed abnormal behaviour. She interfered with teaching, could not concentrate or sit still and it was suspected that she had a learning disability. The psychiatrist found that this girl had no abnormality at all. She learned through her body and through motor actions. She needed movement to think. His diagnosis: "She has no disorder. She is a dancer." The doctor advised the mother to send her little daughter to a dance school. Luckily for the child, she

followed his advice. Later, the girl became a world-famous choreographer. It is about Gillian Lynne (choreographer of the Broadway productions of Cats and The Phantom of the Opera). Imagine if someone had given her medication to help her sit still better! Observing and interpreting behaviour and giving it a positive consequence can drastically determine a child's future. A teacher has the power to MAKE or CRACK a child. Miracles are possible if we are willing to convert negative energy to positive.

## Become a child with your child again

"Le problème est que nous cherchons quelqu'un pour vieillir ensemble, alors que le secret est de trouver quelqu'un avec qui rester enfant." Charles Bukowski (America 1920 - 1994)

Can you still clearly remember some of your childhood lessons or teachers, while you hardly remember others? Then chances are that these memories have something to do with **your field of interest** or that they **touched you in your emotions**.

I try to motivate my students (both for French and music) by empathising with what captivates HIM. When creating variations on twinkle rhythms, I chose the following topics: knights, dinosaurs, Zoo animals, witch and wizard... Success guaranteed!

We can also use **their environment or trends that are familiar to them**, e.g. once put on rap music to read rhythms in the cadence after you have already done this several times with the piano. They find this incredibly fun. The objective remains the same: to read the rhythm at the right tempo and in the appropriate cadence. The working form is surprisingly different and that's okay for once, I think. You can find the music I used once here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rjiHUofNKg>

### Freestyle Rap Instrumental 2016 (FREE DOWNLOAD)

The song from the repertoire "What's in the box?" ends with an open question, no doubt deliberately chosen that way by Elena. I then do a brief round-robin asking what should be in their favourite present. This stimulates their imagination and at least boosts their motivation to stay on task.

In a CML lesson, the parent acts as a facilitator. You observe the teacher closely in order to take over his role at home. You follow your child's pace, motivate, guide but do not force. Allow your child to make mistakes and learn from them. Do not allow your child to become afraid of making mistakes. Sir Ken Robinson said in TED Talks in 2007, "We now run national education systems where mistakes are the worst things you can make. We are brought up in such a way that we lose our creativity." He then quoted Picasso: *Every child is born an artist. The trick is to remain an artist when we grow up.* If you are not prepared to make mistakes, you will never be able to come up with anything original. "

### Repeat the learning seen

Shinichi Suzuki said you have to play a difficult violin passage as many as 10 000 times before you master it properly. In response to a question from a student about whether you need to practise a lot, he laconically said, "You should only practise on the days you eat."

It is also very important when learning a foreign language that you constantly repeat new words or phrases. In the beginning, I found it difficult to do this during class without boring the children. Now I have a whole range of games I do or songs I make to fix new vocabulary. The children like it because the working forms vary each time, even though the content remains the same. By approaching the knowledge from different angles, you are also more likely to make everything stick better to memory.

At CML, we work in the same way. For example, we teach 10 basic rhythms. When these are well known, we give variations. These are the same rhythms, but in a new setting or around a new theme. Children love that. A good example is the approach with the rhythm cards. First, they are simply read with the metre indicated by the piano. Then they are used to do polyrhythmic exercises . Even though the same rhythms are repeated, the exercises give a whole new dynamic and other goals are pursued.

Each CML lesson in the first year consists of 7 different phases. At the beginning of each phase, we briefly repeat what we did the previous lesson and then comes a piece of new learning. Children love and need this, not only because it is safe and recognisable, but also because this is the only way we can store everything properly in our memory. Here, the role of the parents at home is crucial. Every day, the parent practices one or more parts of the lesson with the child.

## Educate children through music

This is not a general principle one gives language initiation, examples that inspired me language initiation French working forms. During a met a teacher who, with a method for children from French. **Vincent Heuzé** and did

so with music. Instead of as in most other textbooks for with a song. The song had theme and aimed to

grammatical item. The authors' slogan was: "First make sure you have a rousing or good-in-the-ear melody. If that doesn't catch on, you can forget the rest too. " I was so full of those songs that I decided to start working on them in my class with the 11-12-year-olds. The problem was that I was supposed to follow the traditional (boring) method and the textbook had to be given in full. I left out some things from the textbook to free up time for one lesson from the fun method. I told the students, "We will learn a new song. You don't have to learn the vocabulary and grammar for a test. We'll just do this once in between for fun." That was in September. By the end of June, all students, including the weakest, still knew the song, vocabulary and grammar rules by heart. How was it possible that they could not (or would not) memorise the compulsory learning and this song could? The main reason is undoubtedly MOTIVATION, but for some pupils, melody and rhythm certainly helped the process of memorisation as well.



that is applied everywhere but I saw some practical and since then I only give and English through musical training course in France, I colleague, had developed a abroad who want to learn **Jean-Christophe Delbende**

starting with a little dialogue - learning French - they started lyrics around a particular introduce the children to a



Vincent Heuzé



Jean-Christophe Delbende

Does music make people smarter? A lot of research has been done to find out whether music makes people more intelligent. I have read several studies and articles and watched lots of YouTube videos on the internet.

Scientific studies on children have revealed a positive link between making music and intelligence and social skills. In short, making music makes you a lot smarter in all sorts of areas. The cause of all this extra smarts lies in the neuronal connections in the brain. In our brain, tasks are well distributed.

Certain parts of your brain mainly come into action when you move, others when you listen, still others when you speak. Those who can quickly make connections between different areas are at an advantage. And it is the same with your brain as with the muscles in your body: what you train gets stronger, what you neglect gets weaker. In the left hemisphere of the brain, you find mostly functions related to speech and intellect. The right side mainly takes care of feelings. When you make music, the connection between that left and right side becomes stronger. Making music has a positive effect on neuronal connections in the brain. As the neurons are stimulated to action, the connections are strengthened. Clearly, this will positively affect intellectual abilities. While making music, your brain is challenged in many areas and complex processes take place. You read off the notes to be played from the score. Then, in your brain, the visual information is converted into an understanding. You then know, for example, that you have seen a sol. Then you translate that information into an action to be performed: a certain fingering on your musical instrument. Then the action is performed. For instance, your finger depresses the key on the piano or touches the string on your guitar. And you're not there yet, because now your hearing comes into action to check whether what you played is what you were supposed to do. If you play with others, this also checks whether what you are doing is in proportion to what others around you are doing. And all these actions take place in a split second.

A number of interesting conclusions can be drawn from research into the effects of music lessons in children. Studies of this kind look at groups of children who are or are not taking music lessons.

- Children who make music have a heightened understanding of mathematics and physics.
- Children who make music have better developed abstraction skills and can think better analytically.
- Children who play music develop a better memory.
- In people who make music, the left and right hemispheres of the brain are better connected.
- Making music has a positive effect on people's intelligence.
- Making music has a positive effect on people's moods, feelings.
- Making music contributes to better social development because making music requires you to be considerate of each other, to listen to each other. Making music is about the whole and you learn to take that into account.
- Making music affects expression skills and speech development. Learning to play a musical instrument also develops your motor skills, the ability to move quickly and smoothly.
- Making music makes you a smarter and more complete person and gives you even more opportunities to communicate. (<https://onlinemuziekacademie.nl/muziek-maken-maakt-slimmer/>)

<https://youtu.be/ROJKCYZ8hng>



For the third year in a row, I am teaching KUNSTKUUR, a project that promotes cooperation between schools and external cultural partners. I teach French language initiation using musical means: songs, drama, film, poetry... It is amazing how much the children pick up and process in this way without reading or writing a single word. I see much better results than with traditional methods followed by the vast majority of Belgian teachers. And yet this approach is very rare. What is the reason for that?

I made the same reservation regarding traditional music schools in Belgium. Why is it that CML is not yet better known in our regions and, above all, if this method has proven its success, why is it not widely used? In my own area, I already advertised a lot, but often without response. The reasons given? The training is abroad, is too expensive, requires too much effort. I cannot deny this, but the teacher - and above all hundreds of children who will be taught by that teacher - get so much in return. Why do so few parents let their child take CML in our Art School or do others quickly drop out? You are asked to show strong commitment as a parent, to make music with your child every day... When it comes to music initiation classes at the Art Academy, we see many parents enrol their child because it only costs as much as after-school care and at least their children will learn something useful outside school. Well...

Fortunately, in Italy we also saw evidence to the contrary: motivated parents who want to give their child a full education through music. The meetings in Faenza that we had the privilege of observing twice already gave us a great boost of hope and energy. We witnessed teachers using the prior knowledge of the children and their parents to teach new songs and choreography in a fun way. It was very inspiring to discover how much everyone learned in a short time... and how the fire during the whirlwind show was contagious to the audience. Moreover, this was a rich language bath of Italian for Harold and me. There I could experience on the spot what my students experience in my classes when they take French lessons for the first time. Hahaha, I realise now that I actually got to experience the title of this thesis first-hand at that moment. How beautiful is that!





# Afterword: How CML changed my teaching.

I can hardly provide statistical evidence that CML is better than our traditional methods of teaching children music. I don't have the manpower or resources for that. I can, however, testify that it has changed the way I teach (even to plus-eighteen-year-olds) and even my whole life. Two years ago, I was stressing from Friday about what curriculum I would teach the following week. I searched feverishly for stories, fun activities, musical exercises that would allow me to entertain the children for 60 minutes with the intention that the motivation and task tension would last and that they would still pick up some musical elements in preparation for the following year's solfège lesson. I spent an average of two to three hours preparing for one lesson. That was nerve-wracking and impossible to sustain. Now I know someone else has already invented the hot water and I get to draw from that rich source. It is very thoughtful, there is a learning line in it and everything is conveyed in a playful way. We urgently need change in our traditional music education in Belgium too!

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# Table of contents

Foreword	p. 1
Why did I choose this topic?	p. 2
Some common principles in CML and language initiation	p. 3
Start offering formation as early as possible	p. 3
Involve parents in children's learning process	p. 3
Be positive! Inspiring personalities	p. 5
<i>Shinichi Suzuki</i>	p. 5
<i>Maria Montessori</i>	p. 6
<i>Gionvanni Bosco</i>	p. 8
<i>Glenn Doman</i>	p. 9
<i>Michèle Forestier</i>	p. 11
<i>Emmi Pikler</i>	p. 13
<i>Sir Ken Robinson</i>	p. 15
Become a child again with your child	p. 16
Repeat the learning seen	p. 17
Educate children through music	p. 17
Afterword: How CML changed my teaching	p. 21
Acknowledgements	p. 21
Table of contents	p. 22