

Significance, Issues and Solutions in Dance Education Assessment within China Higher Education

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Abstract

As China prioritizes quality education reform, the focus on individual and professional development has increased, providing more opportunities for dance enthusiasts. However, challenges exist in the current state of higher education dance programs. Proposing an assessment system is crucial for effective dance education and aligning with broader goals of comprehensive education. This study seeks to explore the evaluation methods used in dance education, focusing on examining their significance, identifying key issues, and proposing effective solutions. This study employed library research, specifically focusing on academic journals and research reports. The study's findings yield dual significance, encompassing both theoretical importance and practical contributions to the realm of dance education assessment. On one hand, the theoretical importance underscores the pivotal role of dance education in shaping higher education, contributing significantly to students' holistic development, intellectual qualities, and moral character. On the other hand, the practical contribution emphasizes the tangible impact of dance assessment on fostering comprehensive abilities, role awareness, self-identity, and intrinsic temperament among students. However, the study identifies critical issues, including unclear educational goals, weak student foundations, non-standard curriculum design with material similarity, and low teaching proficiency with outdated methods. To address these challenges, proposed solutions involve clarifying educational goals and foundations, enhancing curriculum design and teaching materials, as well as improving teaching proficiency and methods. These recommendations aim to optimize dance education, aligning it with students' needs and fostering a conducive learning environment in higher education.

Keywords: Significance, Issues, Solutions, Dance Education, Assessment

Introduction

As the development and innovative reforms of quality education deepen in China, there is a growing emphasis on the popularization of dance education, gradually making its way into university classrooms and becoming a significant public course in higher education. Dance plays a crucial role in promoting students' emotions, physical health, shaping their physique, and cultivating artistic temperament (Guo & Gan, 2023; Hsia & Hwang, 2020; Liu et al, 2022; Meng & Loy, 2023). However, despite the attention given to dance education, the effectiveness of its widespread implementation in China is not ideal. Some universities either lack dance courses or, if available, fail to prioritize them, resulting in dance education being marginalized.

Dance is a component of aesthetic education within the realm of quality education. Universities need to recognize its importance in fostering students' overall development. Actively constructing a comprehensive assessment system for dance education is essential. This will allow the positive impact of dance education to unfold, subsequently facilitating its broader integration and promotion within higher education institutions.

The Significance in Dance Education Assessment

Dance education assessment holds vital importance in higher education, fostering physical and mental well-being, refining aesthetic sensibilities, and nurturing innovation (Jin & Barbara, 2022; Owens, 2023). In China's evolving educational landscape, dance's growing prominence necessitates a robust assessment system (Li & Chang, 2023; Meng & Loy, 2024). Beyond theoretical significance, dance education practically enhances students' comprehensive abilities, encourages role awareness, nurtures self-identity, and refines intrinsic qualities. Evaluating these contributions is essential for optimizing dance education, aligning it with students' needs, and fostering holistic development in higher education.

(i) Theoretical Importance in Dance Education Assessment

The theoretical significance of dance education assessment in higher education lies in its pivotal role in shaping the academic landscape. As the academic realm evolves, dance education becomes a crucial component of higher education, contributing significantly to the holistic development of students. Beyond its role in promoting physical and mental well-being, dance education enhances aesthetic and innovative capacities, fostering a comprehensive growth in students. Embedded within the broader context of arts and qualitative education, dance holds rich humanistic elements that, through subtle influence, contribute to shifts in students' ideologies, moral sentiments, and aesthetic sensibilities. By prioritizing dance aesthetics, dance education, as a part of quality education, becomes a potent tool for refining students' intellectual qualities and cultivating moral character, presenting a pragmatic and essential contribution to the effective implementation of quality education.

The philosophical aesthetic theory, choreologists aesthetic theory, sociological aesthetic theory, and therapeutic dance theory are interconnected within the realm of dance education. Philosophical aesthetic theory offers a foundation for understanding the artistic and conceptual aspects of dance, guiding the educational approach to imparting these principles. Choreologists aesthetic theory provides a structural framework for creating and teaching dance sequences, emphasizing the importance of well-choreographed movements in dance education. Sociological aesthetic theory explores the cultural and social dimensions

of dance, helping educators contextualize dance within broader societal influences. Therapeutic dance theory, with its focus on emotional and cognitive well-being, informs dance educators about the potential therapeutic benefits of dance in educational settings. Together, these theories contribute to a comprehensive understanding of dance education, guiding its philosophy, structure, societal context, and therapeutic applications.

(ii) Practical Contribution in Dance Education Assessment

The practical significance of dance assessment within the larger educational framework is centered on our dedication to creating a meaningful social influence through hands-on evaluations, covering the performance of dance exercises and repertoire presentations. When examined in conjunction with the dance curriculum, this document offers essential insights for candidates, providing valuable guidance for their understanding. The practical activity holds considerable weight, contribution to the overall course assessment, alongside the question paper and performance components. Divided into choreography and choreography Review dance performance, candidates undertaking this assessment are entrusted with the creation, presentation, and evaluation of a choreography designed for two dancers, with the exclusion of themselves from the performance.

In the context of socioeconomic development, it strategically shifts students' learning focus towards enhancing comprehensive abilities, facilitating their seamless integration into societal life. Amidst the diverse academic landscape, dance emerges as an ancient artistic expression that not only relaxes students' minds and bodies but also refines their sentiments. The tailoring of dance quality education to the specific conditions of university students, aligned with educational objectives, serves to elevate the overall quality of dance education and significantly contributes to the holistic development of students.

The evaluation of dance quality education in higher education encompasses multiple dimensions. Firstly, it fosters students' awareness of roles and enhances cooperation skills. Secondly, it nurtures self-awareness and fosters individual development. Thirdly, it actively contributes to the cultivation of students' intrinsic temperament. Lastly, it plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' cognitive structures, facilitating comprehensive development. As candidates engage with this practical activity, a thorough understanding and adherence to the provided guidelines are essential for a successful and comprehensive participation in the dance assessment.

Dance education assessment is crucial in higher education, promoting holistic student development, refining aesthetics, and nurturing innovation. Theoretical importance emphasizes its role in shaping academics and influencing ideologies. Interconnected theories guide its philosophy. Practically, it contributes to social impact through hands-on evaluations. In China, it aligns with socioeconomic development, enhancing students' comprehensive abilities. The evaluation encompasses role awareness, cooperation skills, self-awareness, individual development, intrinsic temperament cultivation, and cognitive structure enhancement. Adherence to guidelines is vital for a comprehensive dance assessment, fostering holistic development in higher education.

Issues in Dance Education Assessment

Dance education assessment faces significant challenges in Chinese higher education. These challenges include unclear educational goals and weak student foundations, non-standard curriculum design with high material similarity, and low teaching proficiency combined with outdated methods (Lin, 2019; Vincent et al., 2020; Wang, 2021). These issues impact the overall quality of dance programs, hindering student learning experiences and the effectiveness of dance education in universities. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the improvement and advancement of dance quality education.

(i) Unclear Educational Goals, Weak Student Foundation

Any action requires a specific goal to give it direction. Similarly, dance education needs a clear goal for its distinct development. In China, the implementation of dance quality education in universities has been relatively short-lived, leading to issues such as unclear goal positioning, lack of education targets, imperfect teaching methods, and weak dance foundations among students. The absence of a unified dance quality education assessment system and evaluation standards further contributes to the lack of standardization in dance education. Dance, being an art form with strong professional requirements, demands dancers to undergo long-term dance foundation training. However, the current state of dance quality education in universities reveals that some non-dance major students opting for dance quality education have not received systematic dance knowledge learning and body posture training beforehand. Consequently, they may experience difficulties in the learning process, such as stiffness in body movements, poor body coordination, and a lack of rhythm awareness. This instills a sense of difficulty and apprehension toward dance, affecting students' enthusiasm for learning and the overall quality improvement of dance quality education.

(ii) Non-Standard Curriculum Design, High Similarity in Teaching Materials

The formulation of an educational curriculum system is crucial for achieving educational goals and is a significant carrier for educational development. Dance quality education needs to construct a scientifically reasonable curriculum system based on the basic goals of quality education. However, many universities have not yet built a complete curriculum system specifically for dance quality education. This is reflected in the singularity of course settings, insufficient class hours, inadequate educational funding, and high similarity in the selection of teaching materials. In many universities, dance quality education is treated as an elective course with a narrow focus and a lack of professionalism. Students have few class hours, and the duration is short. For students with poor dance foundations, it is challenging to receive systematic dance education. Their choice of the course is often driven by the need to earn credits, exacerbated by the lack of specialized dance classrooms and equipment. Students are forced to practice in open spaces, making it difficult to ensure teaching quality. Due to a shortage of dance teaching materials in universities, many institutions resort to using teaching materials from Beijing Dance Academy, leading to a high degree of similarity in teaching materials. Given that Beijing Dance Academy's teaching goals are relatively high, ordinary universities find it challenging to meet these standards.

(iii) Low Teaching Proficiency of Instructors, Outdated Teaching Methods

The effectiveness of education largely depends on the teaching proficiency of instructors. At the current stage, many dance teachers in Chinese universities generally lack professional

competence, possess low teaching proficiency in dance, and adopt outdated teaching methods, posing a significant obstacle to the development of dance quality education in universities. The late start of dance quality education in China is one reason, and the qualification training system for dance teachers has not been perfected. There is an uneven distribution of teacher resources, with a concentration in professional art schools and normal colleges such as Beijing Dance Academy, while general universities lack sufficient teaching staff for dance quality education. Some existing dance teachers in universities are generally older in age, making them susceptible to outdated teaching concepts and limited teaching methods. They tend to stick to traditional teaching styles and may not actively innovate teaching methods to keep up with the times. This reliance on didactic teaching methods and a rigid adherence to textbooks leads to a situation where the quality of dance quality education cannot keep pace with the development needs of the times.

Dance education in Chinese higher education faces challenges such as unclear goals, weak student foundations, non-standard curriculum designs, and low teaching proficiency. The relatively short history of dance quality education implementation contributes to these issues, impacting the overall quality and effectiveness of dance programs. Addressing these challenges is vital for the advancement and improvement of dance education in Chinese universities.

Solutions in Dance Education Assessment

Addressing issues in dance education assessment requires targeted strategies to enhance its effectiveness and overall quality (Lin, 2019). Three key solutions emerge to navigate these issues successfully includes (i) clarify educational goals and foundation, (ii) enhance curriculum design and teaching materials, and (iii) improve teaching proficiency and methods. These solutions aim to promote a more structured and comprehensive approach to dance education assessment, fostering an environment conducive to meaningful learning experiences and continuous improvement.

(i) Clarify Educational Goals and Foundation

Articulate clear and well-defined educational goals for dance education in higher education institutions, providing a comprehensive framework that specifies the desired accomplishments and skill sets for students. Implement a strategic approach by introducing prerequisite courses or foundational training initiatives designed to ensure a thorough grasp of dance knowledge and body posture. This strategic measure is particularly crucial for students without a background in dance, equipping them with essential fundamentals before embarking on advanced dance programs. By establishing these foundational elements, the educational experience is enhanced, fostering a solid groundwork for students to excel in more advanced aspects of dance education.

(ii) Enhance Curriculum Design and Teaching Materials

Elevate the structure of the curriculum and enrich teaching resources for dance education. Develop an all-encompassing and uniform curriculum system that accommodates students with diverse skill levels, offering a variety of courses to cater to their individual needs. Broaden the array of teaching materials by engaging in partnerships with various institutions and professionals, minimizing dependence on a single source. This collaborative effort

ensures a more inclusive and expansive approach to dance education, enhancing the overall learning experience for students.

(iii) Improve Teaching Proficiency and Methods

Enhance the expertise and methodologies of dance educators through the initiation of continuous professional development initiatives. These programs should concentrate on refining teaching skills, staying abreast of contemporary pedagogical approaches, and instigating innovative instructional methods. Advocate for a transition to student-centered and experiential learning, endorsing inventive teaching techniques that resonate with current dance education requirements and accommodate various learning preferences.

By clearly defining educational goals and providing a solid foundation, especially for non-dance majors, through prerequisite courses, the learning experience is enriched. The improvement of curriculum structure and diversification of teaching materials contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive dance education. Additionally, elevating teaching proficiency and methods through ongoing professional development programs ensures educators stay abreast of modern approaches, fostering innovative and student-centered learning experiences in the realm of dance education.

Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

Concluding the analysis of dance education assessment, researchers delve into its transformative effects, wide-ranging implications, and strategic recommendations for ongoing enhancement in Chinese higher education.

(i) Conclusion

In summary, dance quality education in Chinese higher education has broken away from traditional, singular talent development methods. Tailoring activities to the diverse needs of student groups, dance quality education aims to cultivate university students' artistic appreciation and discernment. With a steadfast commitment to holistic development, it significantly contributes to shaping students' sound personalities and cultivating elegant qualities. Thus, emphasizing the exploration of assessment system issues and the establishment of a rational teaching framework in higher education dance quality education holds profound practical significance for promoting the wholesome development of students' physical and mental well-being.

(ii) Implications

The implications of dance education assessment within Chinese higher education are far-reaching. The shift towards a more diversified and comprehensive approach in dance quality education, catering to varied student needs, has immediate implications for the cultivation of artistic appreciation and discernment. The emphasis on holistic development implies a broader impact on students' overall well-being, contributing to the establishment of sound personalities and the fostering of elegant qualities. Additionally, the acknowledgment of assessment system issues and the need for a rational teaching framework highlights the importance of continuous improvement in educational practices to better serve the evolving needs of students in contemporary society.

(iii) Recommendations

To further enhance dance education assessment within Chinese higher education, several recommendations can be considered. Firstly, there is a need for ongoing research and exploration into assessment system issues to ensure that the evaluation methods align with the goals of cultivating comprehensive abilities in students. Secondly, the construction of a rational teaching framework should involve collaborative efforts among educators, institutions, and professionals to create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. Lastly, innovative teaching methodologies that align with modern educational needs should be actively promoted, emphasizing a student-centered approach and experiential learning. These recommendations collectively contribute to the continual improvement and advancement of dance education within the unique context of Chinese higher education.

Concluding the examination of dance education assessment, researchers explore its transformative impacts, diverse implications, and strategic recommendations for continuous improvement in the context of Chinese higher education. The findings underscore the need for a nuanced approach to talent cultivation, emphasizing holistic development and artistic appreciation. The implications extend beyond individual skill acquisition to contribute to students' overall well-being and character formation. Recommendations focus on ongoing research into assessment systems, collaborative efforts for a balanced teaching framework, and the promotion of innovative teaching methodologies. This comprehensive approach aims to elevate the quality and effectiveness of dance education within the unique landscape of Chinese higher education.

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