

Research on the teaching reform of dance choreography and directing based on the cultivation of innovative ability

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ABSTRACT

As art education increasingly emphasizes cultivating innovative abilities, traditional dance choreography teaching models face challenges, particularly their inadequacies in fostering students' innovative thinking and independent creative abilities. This paper focuses on the cultivation of innovative ability in teaching dance choreography and directing, discusses the limitations of the current teaching mode, and puts forward a teaching reform scheme based on the cultivation of innovative ability. By analyzing the connotation of innovation ability and its important role in choreography and directing dance, this paper constructs a theoretical framework for cultivating innovation ability and further designs specific teaching reform strategies, including the innovation of Curriculum, teaching methods and evaluation mechanism. The research shows that the cultivation of innovation ability can improve students' creativity and promote the overall development of dance art education. This paper provides a theoretical basis and practical path for the future teaching reform of choreography and directing.

KEYWORDS

innovation ability; dance choreography and directing; teaching reform; education mode

As the core part of dance creation, choreography and directing require students to have solid dance skills and strong, innovative abilities to cope with the ever-changing artistic development and social needs. However, many dance choreography and directing courses still focus on skills training, ignoring the cultivation of students' innovative abilities. This leads to many students lacking independent thinking and innovative solutions when facing creative tasks. Therefore, how to effectively cultivate students' innovative ability in teaching dance choreography and directing has become an important issue to be solved in art education.

The traditional teaching mode of choreography and directing usually emphasizes teaching techniques and learning fixed routines. Students are often in a state of passive acceptance and lack in-depth understanding and innovative attempts at dance creation. With the increasing requirements of the Society for creating dance art, cultivating innovation ability is particularly important. By promoting the reform of dance choreography, directing teaching, and cultivating creative thinking and practical ability, we can better provide students with free space for creation and stimulate their artistic potential^[1]. This paper explores how to promote choreography and directing teaching reform by cultivating innovation ability.

1 The current situation of the cultivation of innovative ability in the teaching of dance choreography and directing

1.1 The concept of innovation ability and its significance in dance choreography and directing

The innovation ability in choreography and directing is embodied in the ability of thinking and practice to break the traditional paradigm and reconstruct artistic expression. This ability requires the choreographer to transform emotional experience, cultural cognition and technical means into dance language with unique aesthetic value. The body symbols of traditional folk dance are deconstructed and reconstructed; they can be naturally integrated into the modern narrative scene, and the intervention of digital media technology expands the extension possibility of body movements in the virtual space. In the process of teaching, the core of the cultivation of innovative ability is to guide students to go beyond the stage of movement imitation and explore the generation logic of dance language in depth: how the unconventional processing of rhythm makes dramatic conflicts, how the metaphorical design of space scheduling carries social issues^[2]. When students establish a three-dimensional creative system of "action symbols—emotional communication—the conceptual expression," dance works can transcend the level of technical display and elevate to an artistic practice that carries deep thoughts. This leap from skill replication to artistic creation signifies an essential transformation in dance education from formal training to aesthetic enlightenment.

1.2 The characteristics and limitations of traditional choreography and directing teaching mode

Teaching traditional dance choreography and directing has long followed the linear path of "Classical repertoire

analysis—movement element extraction—work reproduction and arrangement. Teachers usually choose "Swan Lake," "The Red Detachment of Women," and other typical works to teach students through the imitation of classical choreography structure and action combination to complete the course task^[3]. Although this model helps to establish the basic knowledge framework of choreographers and directors quickly, it gradually shows the dilemma of disconnection with the times: there are intergenerational differences between the creative background of classical plays and the life experience of contemporary youth, which makes it difficult for students to activate genuine emotional resonance during the imitation process; the standardized evaluation system overemphasizes the norm of movement and the integrity of structure, which makes students fall into the psychological stereotype of conservative creation; The teaching environment dominated by teachers' authority tends to make students mistake individual aesthetic preference for creative criteria, and restrain the formation of independent observation and critical thinking ability. The assimilation of narrative structure in the performance of dance works by students in colleges and universities is an intuitive example of the limitation of traditional teaching mode on developing innovative thinking.

1.3 The lack of cultivation of innovative ability in the teaching of dance choreography and directing

The current teaching system of dance choreography and directing is structurally deficient in systematically cultivating innovative ability. Regarding curriculum setting, choreography courses mostly focus on senior undergraduate students and are set up in isolation. There is a lack of organic connection with interdisciplinary courses such as dance anthropology and experimental drama, which limits students' thinking vision. At the level of teaching methods, most teachers still follow the mechanical training mode of "Action demonstration—student imitation—detail correction" and rarely carry out open creative practices such as theme improvisation and environmental dance. The teaching evaluation mechanism reinforces the absence of incentives for innovation—the criteria for assessing works have long focused on the precision of actions and the integrity of the structure, lacking effective evaluation tools for dimensions such as the originality of creative concepts and the experimental nature of artistic expression. Under this circumstance, the creative tendency of "Technique safety first" gives students the utilitarian mentality of "Following the teacher's template to avoid the risk of innovation." When the educational process degenerates into technical reproduction training, the field of dance choreography and directing will inevitably face the dual crisis of originality depletion and style homogenization.

2 The theoretical framework of dance choreography and directing teaching reform based on the cultivation of innovative ability

2.1 The theoretical basis of cultivating innovation ability

The theoretical support for cultivating creative ability comes from the cross-field of educational psychology and artistic creativity. The theory of constructivism emphasizes that learners acquire knowledge through active exploration and meaning construction, which provides a direction for the teaching of choreography and directing—teachers should act as guides rather than authoritative transmitters, helping students to establish autonomous associations between movement language and emotional expression. The theory of multiple intelligences reveals individual differences in spatial, kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligence dimensions. It suggests that teaching should respect students' personalized creative paths, such as stimulating physical kinesthetic intelligence through improvisational exercises and developing interpersonal intelligence through teamwork^[4]. The creativity system theory further points out that innovation is the product of the interaction of personal traits, professional domain knowledge and social and cultural environment, which means that the teaching of dance choreography and directing needs to build an open and inclusive environment, students are allowed to draw inspiration from folk culture, contemporary social issues and even interdisciplinary art. Integrating these theories provides the underlying logic for teaching reform: cultivating innovative ability is not an isolated technical training. It is a systematic project realized through the synergy of cognitive reconstruction, environment shaping and individual potential release.

2.2 The relationship between choreography and directing and creativity

The essence of dance choreography and directing teaching is the incubator of artistic creativity, and its relationship with innovation ability is bidirectional and dynamic. On the one hand, the scientific design of the teaching system can activate students' innovative potential: by deconstructing the choreography logic in classical works, students master the knowledge of the regularity of movement scheduling and rhythm processing through the training of propositional creation, students can learn to master the regularity of movement scheduling and rhythm processing, students learn to translate abstract concepts (such as "The passage of time" and "Group isolation") into visual body language. On the other

hand, the improvement of innovation ability feeds back the teaching practice: students with critical thinking will question the limitations of the inherent choreography paradigm and promote the iteration of the teaching case library. This relationship requires teaching to break the one-way transmission mode of "Teacher demonstration—student replication" and turn to the cyclic process of "Problem guidance—experimental exploration—reflective iteration." For example, in the environmental dance course, teachers put forward the open proposition of "How to express the sense of oppression in architectural space with dance," students formed diverse solutions through field investigations, bodily perception experiments, and the integration of multimedia technology." The symbiotic relationship between teaching and innovation ability determines that the reform must reconstruct the role of teachers and students, teaching content and evaluation criteria.

2.3 The Key objectives and directions of Teaching Reform

The core goal of dance choreography and directing teaching reform is to build an "Innovation-driven" teaching model, and the specific implementation direction includes three dimensions. In terms of curriculum system reconstruction, it is necessary to break the traditional linear separation of "Basic training-repertoire-choreography" and establish an interdisciplinary curriculum group: Introducing Dance Anthropology into choreography and directing theory courses to help students understand the cultural metaphor behind the movement to integrate the digital media creation module into the choreography technology class to expand the space-time dimension of body expression. At the level of teaching method innovation, the promotion of project-based learning and flipped classroom: students undertake real art projects in small groups (such as dance design in community culture festivals) to cultivate comprehensive innovation ability in the whole cycle of research, creation and performance^[5]; teachers transform from knowledge lecturers to project consultants and guide students to solve problems independently through periodic feedback. In terms of the transformation of the evaluation mechanism, a "Process innovation evaluation" system should be established: in addition to the degree of completion of the work, dimensions such as "Creative novelty," "Depth of cultural expression," and "Degree of technological integration" should be added, students' self-evaluation, peer evaluation and industry experts' evaluation are combined. These reforms point to a core—to upgrade the choreography and to direct teaching from a "Technology teaching workshop" to an "Artistic innovation laboratory" so that students can master the professional foundation and simultaneously become creative artistic talents with cultural insight and social responsibility.

3 The teaching reform strategy of dance choreography and directing based on the cultivation of innovation ability

3.1 Curriculum and Content Innovation

The reconstruction of the curriculum system needs to break the isolation of the traditional choreography curriculum and build an interdisciplinary knowledge network. Innovative modules such as "Dance and Technology Experiment" and "Social Issues Choreography" are added to the basic choreography course, integrating digital media creation and anthropological field research methods into teaching—students to analyze body movement trajectories through motion capture techniques and design environmental dance in combination with urban space research. The mechanical imitation of classical plays is reduced in terms of content design. The proportion of original proposition creation is increased: themes such as "Contemporary transformation of intangible cultural heritage" and "Dialogue between body and digital media" are set up, guiding students to excavate creative materials from traditional culture and modern science and technology. The course progression adopts a spiral structure of "Basic techniques—experimental exploration—comprehensive creation." For example, in the second grade, a course on "Improvisational Dance and Risk-Taking" is offered, allowing students to engage in physical experimentation without a predetermined theme, accumulating the courage to break conventions through cases of failure. This reform changes the curriculum from "Standardized knowledge infusion" to "Personalized innovation incubation" and provides students with multiple creative path choices.

3.2 Innovation of teaching methods and means

The transformation of teaching methods needs to change from one-way teaching to multi-dimensional interaction. Promoting the "problem-based" teaching method: Teachers propose open-ended topics (such as "deconstructing the dimension of time through dance"), and students form solutions through group discussions and interdisciplinary collaboration, with teachers intervening only as resource coordinators and thought provokers. The deep integration of digital tools changes the creative process—using virtual reality technology to build a three-dimensional choreography space, students can intuitively adjust the formation level and movement trajectory; the motion capture system generates

data visualization charts in real-time, assists students in analyzing the relationship between action tension and emotional expression. Local teaching practice expands the creative field: students are organized to carry out choreography experiments in non-traditional spaces such as community squares and art museums, and creative inspiration is stimulated through environmental interaction. A school uses the subway station as a choreography classroom. After observing the flow of the crowd, students create an "Urban Rhythm," transforming mechanical commuting behaviour into social-critical body language. This teaching method extends the classroom to the real social scene and strengthens the docking of innovation ability and social needs.

3.3 Innovation of teaching evaluation and incentive mechanism

The reform of the evaluation system needs to establish evaluation standards oriented towards "innovative value." In addition to traditional technical indicators (such as action accuracy and structural integrity), dimensions such as "originality of concepts," "depth of cultural expression," and "degree of technological integration" should be added. A diversified evaluation approach should be adopted, combining student self-assessment, peer assessment, and industry experts' evaluations. Process assessment runs through the whole process of creation: setting up a "Creative proposal defence session," asking students to explain the cultural foundation and technical realization path of creative ideas, setting up a "Mid-term experimental results exhibition" to show failed attempts and breakthrough directions, and weaken the evaluation inertia of "Result-only theory." The design of the incentive mechanism emphasizes positive guidance: setting up an "Innovative exploration scholarship" to reward students who have outstanding performance in interdisciplinary integration and technological experiments; building a platform for school-enterprise cooperation; pushing excellent works to art festivals, commercial performances and other practical scenes. A university has introduced the residency program of dance troupes, and students' choreography works are directly arranged for public performance under the guidance of professional choreographers. This closed-loop mechanism of "Creation-feedback-iteration" significantly enhances students' innovative drive. Through the collaborative reform of evaluation and incentive, the teaching system has changed from "Avoiding risks" to "Encouraging breakthroughs," which provides an institutional guarantee for the continuous growth of innovation ability.

4 Conclusion

The innovative reform of choreography and directing teaching is essentially a dual process of liberating artistic creativity and reconstructing the educational paradigm. The research shows that the over-emphasis on technical norms and the absence of innovation incentive mechanisms in the traditional teaching model have led to the dilemma of "Skilled skills and poor thinking" in cultivating choreographers and directors. Through the construction of an interdisciplinary curriculum system, multi-dimensional interactive teaching methods and innovation-oriented evaluation mechanism, teaching reform provides a feasible way to break through this dilemma: integrating digital technology into choreography practice not only expands the physical boundary of body expression but also catalyzes the reconstruction of artistic concepts; the combination of open-ended proposition creation and localized teaching practice promotes students' transformation from cultural observers to artistic interpreters of social issues.

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