

Integrating Social Dance into Higher Vocational Colleges' Preschool Education Major

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Keywords: Social dance, Higher vocational education, Preschool education major, Curriculum optimization

Abstract: This paper studies the potential role of social dance in education, specifically the effects of adding social dance to reform preschool education dance curriculum. Firstly, the author conducted interviews at various vocational colleges to investigate the current situation of dance teaching in vocational college preschool education. According to the training goal of dance class in the preschool education major of higher vocational colleges, this paper discusses a novel methodology to integrate social dance into the dance course of the preschool education major. This paper offers a method to optimize the teaching objectives of dance courses for the preschool education major of higher vocational colleges and conforms to the market demand of “popularization” of dance education for vocational education.

1. Introduction

Social dance refers to the dance type distinct from academic or college dance; it is a social activity enjoyed in spare time. Although social dance does not enjoy as high of a social position as the precise and professional college dance, it has a very broad public base. In China, it inherits the rich national culture of China and passes the cultural interest of citizens to the world. Throughout the development of social dance in the new era, a contemporary pattern has emerged where style tends to be unified and integration is becoming more obvious. With the progress of dance education, higher vocational colleges have begun to seek a ‘diversified’ path of development in dance teaching curriculum, integrating social dance teaching processes based on traditional college dance teaching. Integrating social dance into the dance class of preschool helps students relieve pressure, cultivate their temperament and strengthen their bodies.

2. Preschool Education Dance Instruction in Higher Vocational Colleges

2.1 Analysis of Current Dance Instructional Content

In the process of conducting dance teaching activities for the preschool education major in higher vocational colleges, it is necessary to improve dance teaching content and the professional dance ability of preschool education major students by combining the school leadership characteristics and disciplinary structure of the preschool education. However, investigation revealed problems in preschool education major dance teaching content in higher vocational colleges.

First, there is insufficient instruction of dance theory. According to the training program of higher vocational colleges, the teaching content of the dance course in preschool education is simple, including basic dance training, folk dance, children's dance and other courses, but not dance theory. Not only does this limit accumulation of dance theoretical knowledge by preschool education students, but also limits student ability to make the dance classroom vivid, interesting and engaging according to children's cognitive rules in their future career.

Further, dance performance training is insufficient, particularly in terms of variety. In many institutions, the instructional content of the preschool education major dance course only trains students to lead activities with basic dances, leaving students with a weak ability in dance

performance and choreography. Although the configuration of this teaching content can rapidly boost dance skill in low dance skill students, it falls short in providing a comprehensive dance ability level. Moreover, the curriculum does not ensure teacher ability to teach children dance, nor the ability to choreograph children dances of appropriate difficulty for student performance or competition.

More time should be allotted for future preschool teachers to study dance appreciation. A causal factor is the unbalanced time distribution of teaching content in the dance course. In order to strengthen basic dance skills, the school devotes a large part of its teaching time to a basic ballet training course. However, this standardized and stylized training content is not closely related to the entertaining children dances beneficial in early childhood education. As a result, the ability of the graduates to use children dances to enhance education is diminished.

2.2 An Analysis of the Current Situation of Dance Teaching Methods

At present, the dance teachers of preschool education in higher vocational colleges generally have the problems of 'emphasizing the explanation' and 'neglecting the method'. Even if different props, music and costumes are needed in the process of dance teaching, many dance teachers will choose to ignore the use of these necessary dance elements, instead only explaining and demonstrating dance movements.

In this context, dance teaching methods are relatively old. Many higher vocational colleges are using traditional dance rooms, which have little multimedia equipment, preventing the necessary use of technology. Thus, traditional movement explanation and counting time are used, which serve little use for teaching preschoolers. Under this classical teaching method, acquisition of natural rhythm and time is hampered, doubly lowering the effectiveness of teaching and the resultant ability of the trainee to teach.

Also, the teaching process of dance is relatively scattered. Influenced by the dance education system, most of the dance teachers in higher vocational colleges are college educated. When they teach dance, they mainly focus on the explanation of dance movements. This rigid teaching method increases the difficulty, dampens interest, and models poor teaching contextually. In addition, since the number of students is typically high, there is little individualized attention, which brings an increased chance for having a chaotic or lazy classroom. Many students' learning quality in the classroom cannot be guaranteed, which also lessens the effectiveness of after-school time to improve dance skills.

Additionally, the dance explanation method often fails to engage students. Dance teachers overemphasize movement accuracy and prefer to divide and repeat dance movement sequences. As a result, the students spend too much energy on the same dance movement, resulting in a dull feeling, unable to realize the pleasure brought by the fluency and flexibility in the dance performance. Further, most of the pre-school education students have no previous dance education, resulting in a very limited improvement of students' dance ability.

2.3 An Analysis of the Present Situation of Dance Teaching

Different from other disciplines, dance courses in the preschool education specialty in higher vocational colleges are not well theorized and patterned due to the lag of the theoretical research field, which directly leads to the oversimplification of dance teaching forms.

There are few opportunities for classroom practice since the teaching is mainly based on lectures, and the dance teachers seldom set up classroom discussion or classroom display links according to their own teaching content and objectives. Without so many opportunities for classroom practice, students majoring in pre-school education, even if they have learned some dance knowledge, have no chance to show it, nor can they convey the feedback of dance learning to teachers. The lack of teaching interaction and communication feedback between the teacher and students will severely restrict the promotion of dance class in preschool education, and make students lack the motivation to practice dance.

There is also a lack of practical extracurricular activities. According to the survey, students majoring in preschool education seldom participate in extracurricular practice of dance in higher

vocational colleges, which is instead dominated by dance majors, who are qualified to participate in various dance practice activities outside the classroom. The lack of opportunity for practice is not conducive to improving the dance ability of students majoring in pre-school education, nor to the cultivation of student confidence and professional ability in dance.

Although the pre-school education majors in higher vocational colleges have set up dance classes, many students have not been dance teachers. On one hand, it is difficult for students majoring in preschool education to attach importance to dance class; on the other hand, it will limit the development of students' professional ability, so that they cannot connect dance knowledge and dance skills to the future preschool education career.

3. The Method and Strategy of Integrating Social Dance into the Dance Course of Preschool Education in Higher Vocational Colleges

3.1 Enrich the Teaching Content of Dance Course.

The variety of dance forms and rich dance materials in social dance can effectively make up for the deficiency of the teaching content of preschool education in vocational colleges. Therefore, dance teachers in vocational colleges must work hard from the selection of dance materials and use scientific and reasonable dance teaching content to improve the classroom effect.

The content of theoretical knowledge of social dance should be increased. Higher vocational colleges should set up some social dance theoretical courses for preschool education majors, such that students can learn the common social dance phenomenon, dance music, dance origin, etc. in their school life. By doing so, students can better grasp the theoretical laws of preschool education for use in their future career, teach social dance according to their preferences and cognition, and improve and enhance the interest and vividness of children's dance class.

The content of social dance performance and creation should be increased. In view of the characteristics of the students in higher vocational colleges, if we always use the highly stylized and specialized dance training content in their dance classes, on one hand, it will lower the students' self-confidence, on the other hand, it does not meet the requirements of students' professional ability training. Therefore, adding social dance performances and content creation with strong entertainment in preschool education can effectively raise student interest in dance class. Thus, students will be able to understand the performance characteristics and arrangement process of social dance in the process of playing by social dance and lay the foundation for the future preschool education career.

The content of social dance appreciation should be increased. In the preschool education of higher vocational education, the basic dance skills are emphasized, and the training of traditional dance standardization and stylization is not in line with children's dance education needs. On the premise that social dance theory, social dance performance and creation are all arranged, the dance class of preschool education should also appropriately increase the teaching content of social dance appreciation, and allocate the dance class properly. The proportion of time between them should enable students to know the dance type and basic dance form as soon as they see a dance and accumulate more knowledge materials for children's dance teaching.

3.2 Flexible Dance Classroom Teaching Methods

Flexible and effective teaching methods are important ways to improve the professional dance class of pre-school dance education in vocational colleges. Social dance has beneficial characteristics of randomness. Integrating social dance into the professional dance class of pre-school education can make the classroom teaching method more flexible.

Flexibility is a vehicle to integrate social dance teaching. Dance teachers should be aware of the role of music in promoting dance teaching, properly utilize multimedia equipment and let students dance well under the influence and guidance of music. Simultaneously, dance teachers can also make music of social dance by using rhythm in social dance, such as by beating drums, clapping hands, ringing bells, and chanting, such that the emergence of music rhythm in dance class is

unrestricted, thereby attracting students to devote more attention to the study of social dance.

Also, it is necessary to carry out independent and mutual social dance teaching processes. The dance instruction of the preschool education specialty in higher vocational colleges can try to rid itself of the traditional hierarchical individual mode of instruction and properly guide students to think and create independently. For example, after explaining a social dance to the students, the dance teacher can create a dance situation, give a dance theme and let the students create and perform in groups. The instructor can then guide students to express their feelings when they perform social dance and offer advice and feedback. Through independent learning, student enthusiasm and the teaching effect of dance class will be significantly improved.

Effective use of the layered teaching method in social dance teaching should be employed. This requires dance teachers to have a general understanding of the dance level of pre-school education students throughout the teaching process and divide the students according to skill. Senior classes can be taught with varying styles to facilitate maximal learning. For the intermediate class, the appreciation of social dance should be focused on; for the lower class, the strengthening the training of students' basic dance skills for social dance should be explained to guarantee a foundation of understanding. After a semester of stratified teaching, dance teachers can assess the students and divide them into classes again. Students can be effectively mobilized to participate in the classroom through appropriate teaching content and style.

3.3 Using Social Dance to Enrich Dance Teaching Form

There is a limited instructional duration of the dance course in the preschool education specialty in higher vocational colleges. In order for students to acquire a solid understanding, instructors need to make use of social dance characteristics such as randomness and exaggeration to enrich the teaching.

A social dance classroom practice process for students should be created. Dance teachers should encourage students to organize, use class time to arrange and direct social dances, and display dances via rehearsal and performance. The atmosphere of the classroom practice process should be free and relaxed. If the audience feels happy, they can also randomly join in the dance, further enriching the activity.

Extracurricular practical activities of social dance for students should be organized. Many extracurricular practical activities feature social dance as content. For instance, dance teachers can use an art festival, drama performances, talent shows, or similar opportunities to organize and encourage students majoring in preschool education to participate. Students can effectively improve their self-confidence by participating in more such extracurricular practical activities.

Social dance teaching practice opportunities for students should be provided. Through the opportunity of social dance teaching practice, preschool education students can consolidate the dance knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in the process of integrating theory with practice, and then exercise the practical abilities of children's dance education. Therefore, the school may wish to establish a cooperative relationship with various large kindergartens to strive for teaching practice opportunities for students, such that pre-school education students can use random and engaging social dances to attract preschoolers and increase teacher competency.

4. Conclusion

A high-quality dance teaching method should be heuristic, which needs to have guiding significance for both dance teaching theory and dance teaching practice. At present, there is no independent or well-established curriculum system in the dance course of preschool education major in higher vocational colleges, which will directly restrict and affect the realization of dance education goals of the preschool education degree. Therefore, if college instructors can adopt contemporary teaching methods, actively explore the coupling of social dance and academic dance, and integrate social dance into the dance classroom, they will promote the innovation of dance teaching system in higher vocational colleges and cultivate more talent for society.

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