

Research on the Influence of the Integration of Sports Dance and Folk Dance on Students' Dance Literacy

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Abstract: Under the dual guidance of aesthetic education and cultural heritage preservation, dance pedagogy is transitioning from isolated skill training to holistic competency development. Sports dance, characterized by its standardized techniques, competitive spirit, and rhythmic precision, harmonizes with folk dance's cultural depth, expressive power, and ethnic identity. This integrated approach achieves complementary synergy between technical mastery and artistic expression, athletic performance and cultural significance, as well as standardized norms and individual expression. The study defines the core components of dance literacy, analyzes the pedagogical value and integration logic of sports and folk dance, and systematically elucidates how this fusion enhances students' dance literacy through six dimensions: physical conditioning, technical proficiency, artistic sensibility, cultural awareness, innovative thinking, and professional ethics. It proposes actionable strategies for curriculum redesign, pedagogical innovation, faculty development, and evaluation reform, offering theoretical frameworks and practical solutions for advancing dance education in both academic and public settings.

Keywords: Sports dance; Folk dance; Integrated teaching; Dance literacy; Aesthetic education; Cultural inheritance

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1. Introduction

The aesthetic education in modern schools requires dance education to cultivate individuals through beauty and culture, while strengthening artistic practice and cultural understanding. Current dance teaching practices commonly exhibit issues such as rigid specialization in single dance genres, overemphasis on technique at the expense of artistry, cultural deficiency, and imbalanced literacy. Sports dance instruction tends to focus excessively on technical standards and competitive benchmarks, often neglecting emotional expression and cultural depth. Similarly, folk dance teaching tends to prioritize style imitation, with weaker emphasis on body control, rhythmic precision, and stage presentation.

The integration of sports dance and folk dance in teaching, breaking down barriers through cross-dance collaboration, combines the scientific training, rhythm control, and body shaping of competitive dance with the cultural depth, emotional expression, and physical charm of folk dance. This approach not only enhances students' professional skills but also strengthens their cultural confidence, making it an inevitable choice for implementing moral education and deepening the reform of dance teaching ^[1].

2. Definition of core concepts

2.1. Sports dance

Sports dance (International Standard Dance) combines the attributes of sports competition and artistic performance, including ballroom dance and Latin dance. It emphasizes standardized technical movements, precise rhythm control, stable center of gravity, good body lines, and duet coordination, with a focus on scientificity, standardization, and competitiveness^[2].

2.2. Folk dance

The folk dance originates from the national life and folk culture, carries the regional history, aesthetics and emotion, emphasizes the body rhythm, emotion expression, style identification, cultural connotation, the action is free and lively, expressive, has a distinct nationality, mass, cultural.

2.3. Dance literacy

Dance literacy refers to the comprehensive abilities and qualities developed by students through dance education. It encompasses six core dimensions: physical fitness (strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance), technical skills (standardized movements, technique execution, rhythm control), artistic appreciation (aesthetic judgment, style interpretation, stage presence), cultural awareness (dance history, folk traditions, cultural significance), creative innovation (dance choreography, improvisation, adaptation), and professional ethics (teamwork, stage etiquette, learning attitude)^[3].

3. The logical basis of the integration of sports dance and folk dance teaching

3.1. Complementarity: balance between technology and art

Sports dance provides scientific physical training, standardized movement standards, and clear rhythmic logic, addressing the issues of weak body control, inaccurate rhythm, and insufficient linearity in folk dance students. Folk dance, on the other hand, offers emotional expression, stylistic charm, and cultural ambiance, compensating for the shortcomings of sports dance students, such as limited expressiveness, emotional deficiency, and lack of individuality.

3.2. Commonality: The unity of body and aesthetics

Both of them take the limb as language, take the music as carrier, take the aesthetic as the goal, and have the commonality in the body development, rhythm training and stage presentation, which provide the physiological and artistic basis for the fusion teaching.

3.3. The times: aesthetic education and cultural needs

The integrated teaching not only meets the requirements of aesthetic education for comprehensive artistic ability, but also inherits the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and realizes the trinity of skill improvement, aesthetic cultivation and cultural inheritance.

4. The multidimensional impact of integrated teaching on students' dance literacy

4.1. Physical fitness: Comprehensive enhancement of athletic performance

The steps of ballroom dance, including movement, rotation, jumping, and weight transfer, enhance students' strength, endurance, coordination, and core stability. The twisting, swinging, trembling, and circling movements of folk dance improve flexibility, joint mobility, and body control. Integrated teaching achieves balanced whole-body development, improves posture, enhances physical fitness, and lays a solid physical foundation for dance learning^[4].

4.2. Technical capability: Building a technical system with both standardization and individuality

Standardized training in sports dance helps students establish movement standardization, rhythmic accuracy, and spatial control, reducing technical flaws; stylized training in folk dance enriches body language, enhancing the texture and expressiveness of movements. Students can not only perform precise and standardized competitive movements but also present a lively and natural style expression, significantly improving their technical comprehensiveness.

4.3. Artistic aesthetics: Shaping diverse aesthetics and stage expressiveness

The graceful lines, symmetrical beauty, ceremonial elements, and stage etiquette of sports dance cultivate students' appreciation of formal and orderly aesthetics. Meanwhile, the regional charm, emotional intensity, and folk ambiance of folk dance help students understand artistic conception and emotional beauty. By integrating these approaches, the curriculum broadens aesthetic horizons, enhances students' ability to appreciate and perform diverse dance styles, and significantly boosts their stage presence.

4.4. Cultural awareness: Cultivating national cultural confidence and cross-cultural understanding

Sports dance embodies Western dance culture and international etiquette, while folk dance carries Chinese folk culture and national spirit. Integrated teaching helps students understand the differences between Chinese and foreign dance cultures. Through learning folk dance, students can perceive national history, folk customs, and humanistic spirit, enhancing cultural identity and communication skills. This approach achieves the goal of conveying emotions and moral values through dance.

4.5. Innovation ability: Stimulating the potential of creative writing and improvisation

Integrated dance education transcends the limitations of single-dance genre thinking, encouraging students to combine sports dance techniques with folk dance elements for movement adaptation, choreography, and improvisation. Through cross-stylistic integration, students' imagination, creativity, and artistic expression are stimulated, fostering personalized dance language that meets the demands of contemporary dance creation and performance^[5].

4.6. Professional competence: Cultivating well-rounded dance talents

Integrated teaching emphasizes two-person collaboration, team rehearsals, stage etiquette, and professional attitude, enhancing students' communication skills, teamwork spirit, sense of responsibility, and stress resilience. Whether in performance, teaching, creative production, or event organization, students can quickly adapt to job requirements, with significantly improved professional competitiveness and sustainable development capabilities.

5. Implementation path of the integration of sports dance and folk dance teaching

5.1. Curriculum reconstruction: Constructing an integrated curriculum system

The foundational integration layer combines sports dance training, rhythm drills, and core folk dance movements through physical literacy and rhythmic movement courses to build a solid foundation in body-music coordination. The skill integration layer merges representative dance styles, such as Latin Cha-Cha with Yi ethnic smoke box dance and modern waltz with Tibetan Xianzi dance, creating cross-genre training combinations. The repertoire integration layer collaborates with enterprises to develop fusion performances that blend folk dance cultural essence with sports dance stage presentation, producing works that combine athletic competitiveness with artistic value. The cultural integration layer introduces courses in dance culture, folklore studies, and stage performance theory, achieving simultaneous advancement in technical and cultural proficiency.

5.2. Teaching method innovation: Promoting diversified teaching models

The comparative teaching method contrasts the key techniques, rhythmic features, and stylistic differences between sports dance and folk dance, helping students quickly grasp the fusion points. The situational teaching method creates performance scenarios by integrating the folk dance's cultural background, guiding students to infuse emotions into standardized movements to enhance expressiveness. The project-based teaching method drives students' autonomous learning and collaborative completion through project tasks like creating fusion performances, staging shows, and participating in competitions. The digital teaching method employs video analysis, motion capture, and online resource libraries to assist students in correcting movements, understanding styles, and improving through post-performance review.

5.3. Faculty development: Building a teaching team for the integration of two dance styles

The school implements a dual-track teacher development program. While supporting physical dance instructors in studying folk dance styles and cultural heritage, it also trains folk dance teachers in sports dance techniques and training methodologies, thereby enhancing cross-dance teaching competencies. External experts serve as mentors, with part-time instructors including intangible cultural heritage inheritors of folk dance, sports dance champions, and choreography specialists, who conduct master classes and provide performance guidance. A collaborative teaching-research mechanism establishes cross-dance teaching teams to jointly develop curricula, design courses, and refine instruction, thereby elevating the professionalism and systematic nature of teaching practices.

5.4. Empowerment through practice: Building an integrated teaching and display platform

Classroom practice involves regular group presentations, impromptu performances, and integrated assessments to enhance learning outcomes. Stage practice includes campus dance exhibitions and cultural festivals to build stage experience. Competition practice organizes students to participate in sports dance events, ethnic dance contests, and fusion dance creation competitions, using competitions to drive learning. Social practice involves cultural outreach performances, intangible cultural heritage promotion activities, and cultural tourism projects, enabling students to apply knowledge in real-world settings.

5.5. Evaluation reform: Establishing a competency-oriented and multi-dimensional evaluation system

The evaluation system adopts a multi-dimensional approach, incorporating teacher assessments, student self-evaluations, peer reviews, and expert evaluations from the industry. It covers a comprehensive range of criteria, including physical fitness, technical skills, artistic expression, cultural awareness, innovative thinking, and professional ethics. The evaluation process is designed to be holistic, integrating classroom performance, training attitude, practical achievements, production completion, and competition results. The standards are tailored to individual needs, respecting student differences, encouraging creative styles, and emphasizing the enhancement of competencies and the extent of progress.

6. Safeguard measures for integrated teaching

Institutional safeguards integrate blended learning into talent development programs and teaching quality assessments, establishing curriculum standards, instructional guidelines, and evaluation criteria to ensure consistent implementation. Resource support features dance training studios, rehearsal spaces, and multimedia resource libraries, equipped with professional costumes, props, and musical materials to meet both academic and practical needs. Cultural support cultivates an aesthetic and heritage-focused learning environment through dance culture lectures, folk experience activities, and international dance exchanges, enhancing students' cultural literacy. Mechanism support implements a teaching feedback and continuous improvement system, regularly collecting feedback from students, faculty, and experts to refine course

content, teaching methods, and practical platforms, thereby elevating overall teaching quality.

7. Conclusion and outlook

The integrated teaching of sports dance and folk dance, through complementary techniques, shared aesthetics, and cultural symbiosis, exerts a comprehensive and positive influence on students' dance literacy. It significantly enhances physical fitness and technical skills, cultivates diverse aesthetic sensibilities and stage expressiveness, strengthens cultural confidence and innovative potential, and nurtures well-rounded, high-quality dance talents. This integrated approach aligns with the needs of aesthetic education reform and cultural heritage preservation, effectively overcoming the limitations of single-dance genre instruction and achieving coordinated education in "technique, art, culture, and ethics." In the future, integrated dance education will evolve toward digitalization, theatricalization, industrialization, and popularization. By leveraging digital technologies to enhance teaching precision, we will create more outstanding integrated dance works that meet the demands of cultural tourism performances and sports events, while promoting public dance education in primary and secondary schools. Continuous research and practice in cross-dance genre integration will inject new vitality into the high-quality development of dance education in the new era, enabling students to achieve, inherit, and create beauty through their dance studies.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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