

Exploration of Dance Teaching Strategies in Kindergartens Under the Guidance of Creativity Cultivation

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Abstract: Creativity serves as a vital competency for young children to adapt to future society, with early childhood being the golden period for nurturing this ability. Current dance education practices in kindergartens exhibit a tendency to prioritize performance over creative expression, employ outdated teaching methods, and feature monotonous content formats, all of which hinder the development of children's creativity. This study focuses on fostering creativity by analyzing existing dance teaching practices in kindergartens. Based on this analysis, we propose implementation strategies including creating open and supportive dance environments; designing dance themes and content grounded in children's life experiences; adopting diversified heuristic teaching approaches; implementing process-oriented "observation-support-dialogue" interactive teaching methods; and establishing multifaceted evaluation systems that emphasize creative processes and performance. These strategies aim to provide practical guidance for kindergarten dance education, stimulate children's imagination and creativity, and promote their holistic development.

Keywords: Creativity; Kindergarten dance teaching; Early childhood education

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1. Introduction

Dance serves as a vital medium for young children to express emotions and explore the world, representing a highly creative artistic activity. In kindergarten education, dance instruction not only enhances children's physical coordination and aesthetic appreciation but also stimulates their imagination and creativity. Through body movements, musical rhythms, and spatial awareness, children can freely express themselves, explore the world, and develop their unique artistic language during dance activities. High-quality dance education in kindergartens should focus on nurturing children's creative thinking and expressive abilities, encouraging them to boldly experiment and innovate, thereby laying a solid foundation for their future development.

2. Analysis of the current status of dance teaching in kindergartens

2.1. Teaching objectives excessively pursue performance effects while neglecting creativity development

Some early childhood dance education programs overemphasize "performance presentation." In pursuit of uniform visual

effects during performances or public displays, teaching often degenerates into rapid, precise replication of standardized movement sequences. Educators devote excessive effort to training children's memory and imitation of standardized dance moves, while neglecting fundamental questions like "why this particular movement sequence?" and "what alternative approaches exist?" This outcome-driven approach essentially treats young learners as mere tools for performance tasks rather than creative artists. By sacrificing time and space for exploration, trial-and-error learning, and individual expression, such pedagogy results in mechanical and utilitarian dance instruction^[1].

2.2. Outdated teaching methods that neglect children's subjectivity and interests

In early childhood dance education, many preschools adopt a "teacher demonstration-children imitation" model where instruction revolves around teacher-led activities. Educators often overemphasize technical precision and movement accuracy while neglecting children's developmental characteristics, individual differences, and authentic interests. This didactic approach fails to effectively integrate dance with children's life experiences, emotional worlds, and innate playfulness, resulting in monotonous classrooms that struggle to engage young learners. Consequently, children's self-directed learning initiative, comprehension abilities, and creative potential remain underdeveloped. Outdated teaching methods also manifest in limited interaction and generative learning opportunities. Teachers rarely adjust instructional pacing or content based on children's real-time responses, nor do they provide sufficient chances for children to participate in simple movement choreography or scenario design.

2.3. Monotonous teaching content and format, limiting innovative thinking

Many kindergartens adopt relatively monotonous content and formats in dance education. In terms of curriculum, dance themes often detach from children's daily experiences, exhibiting adult-oriented tendencies. Selected movements tend to be overly complex with abstract emotional expressions that exceed young learners' comprehension and performance capabilities. Regarding instructional approaches, teaching frequently focuses on memorizing pre-made dance routines rather than incorporating diverse, open-ended activities like improvisation, thematic rhythmic movements, dance games, or picture book-based choreography. The repetitive and uninspired teaching process often leads to children's boredom, failing to provide platforms for multi-dimensional thinking and expression. Innovative thinking naturally emerges through rich materials, varied scenarios, and free experimentation. When teaching content and formats become rigid, children's cognitive development gets confined to fixed frameworks, fostering a tendency to seek "one correct answer" instead of exploring "multiple possibilities."

3. The significance of cultivating creativity in kindergarten dance education

3.1. Stimulating imagination and self-expression abilities

Dance, as an artistic expression integrating physical movement, music, and emotion, serves as a vital medium for young children to engage in imagination and self-expression. Guided by creativity cultivation, dance education transcends mere imitation, encouraging children to transform their inner thoughts, stories, and emotions into distinctive physical movements. For instance, when guided to improvise performances based on musical themes or storylines, children can freely interpret concepts like "wind," "little animals," or "happy moods." This process significantly stimulates their imaginative abilities, teaching them to "paint" and "tell stories" through bodily language. As a non-verbal communication tool, dance provides crucial self-expression pathways for children whose language skills are still developing. Through creative dance activities, children can safely and confidently express their emotions, whether joy, excitement, or subtle sadness, enhancing emotional awareness and expression skills while fostering healthy self-identity^[2].

3.2. Enhancing problem-solving and innovative thinking abilities

Creative dance activities are fundamentally a continuous process of exploration and problem-solving that enhances young

children's innovative thinking and practical skills. For instance, when participating in choreography activities, children encounter real-world challenges that drive them to observe, think critically, experiment with movement sequences, evaluate outcomes, and collaborate with peers to make adjustments. This progression, from imaginative brainstorming to focused practice and optimized solutions, represents a classic training exercise for creative thinking. Elements like spatial coordination, rhythmic control, and formation dynamics in dance provide children with rich mental exercises, fostering original and adaptable thinking patterns through kinesthetic experiences. These skills will transfer seamlessly into various aspects of their future learning and daily lives.

3.3. Promoting the comprehensive development of young children

Dance education guided by creativity cultivation objectives holds significance that extends far beyond artistic skills themselves, serving as a comprehensive catalyst for children's holistic development. Physically, it naturally enhances coordination, flexibility, and rhythmic awareness. Cognitively, through associative thinking, symbolic representation, and structured choreography, it fosters observational skills, memory retention, and spatial intelligence. Emotionally and socially, collaborative creative dance activities require children to listen to peers, share ideas, and coordinate movements, thereby nurturing teamwork, communication skills, and empathy. At its core, creativity-focused dance education respects each child's uniqueness while encouraging individual expression, which helps build self-confidence, autonomy, and aesthetic appreciation. Through the process of creating beauty, children experience aesthetic perception and understanding, achieving coordinated development of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social competencies, truly embodying the essence of quality education that prioritizes "child-centered development."

4. Dance teaching strategies in kindergartens guided by creativity cultivation

4.1. Creating an open and supportive dance environment

In terms of physical environment design, dance activities should not be confined to "rehearsal rooms" but should transcend fixed spatial boundaries. For instance, classrooms, corridors, and playgrounds can utilize colorful mats to create distinct zones such as an "imitation area," "free choreography zone," and "prop exploration space." This allows children to move freely between areas based on their interests, whether mimicking ocean waves with body movements or portraying fluttering butterflies using scarves. To foster a positive psychological environment, teachers should promptly offer specific and sincere praise when children perform seemingly awkward yet unique movements. For example: "Your arm movements during the spinning motion looked like blossoming flowers, this creative concept is truly beautiful!" Such observation-based positive feedback resonates more deeply than generic compliments like "You're amazing," as it makes children feel their ideas are valued and recognized. The environment should embrace "mistakes" and "divergence," helping children understand that dance has no single correct answer. Accidental contact with peers during tumbling or falls while experimenting with new moves are natural components of the exploration process^[3].

4.2. Designing dance themes and content based on children's life experiences

The creativity of young children stems from vivid daily perceptions and emotional experiences. Dance education themes and content must closely align with children's life experiences. Teachers should abandon abstract "beautiful" themes from an adult perspective, instead capturing dynamic and emotionally charged scenes from children's daily routines as creative starting points. For example, themes can be designed around specific scenarios like "morning stretching upon waking," "slapping sounds when stepping in puddles during rain," or "tugging and reconciling with friends during toy disputes." In the "Kitchen Symphony" theme, teachers don't need to pre-plan a "stir-frying dance." Instead, they guide children to recall and mimic actions like washing vegetables, cutting ingredients, stir-frying, and tasting, encouraging them to use body language to express rhythms and intensity like water splashing, kitchen knives clattering, and sizzling oil. This life-based approach significantly lowers creative cognitive barriers, allowing children to immediately draw on physical memory and

emotions to explore how to recreate details through movement spontaneously. Building on this foundation, teachers can introduce simple props or sound effects to enrich scenarios, guiding children to develop fragmented actions into narrative-driven physical dramas, transforming dance into their language for storytelling^[4].

4.3. Adoption of multifaceted and heuristic teaching methods

Gamified teaching transforms tedious drills into engaging challenges. For instance, “jumping” exercises can be designed as “Little Frogs Crossing Lotus Leaves,” while “spinning” drills may be turned into competitions like “I’m the Little Whirlwind.” During these games, the focus shifts from mechanical movements to playful expression and diverse physical exploration. Contextual teaching creates imaginative spaces through stories, music, or physical objects, guiding children to react and create as if they were immersed in the scenario. For example, playing music with wind, rain, and thunder sounds allows children to imagine themselves as seeds growing through storms. They’ll express their own interpretations of breaking through soil, swaying, welcoming raindrops, and finally blooming, each child’s “growth dance” becomes uniquely personal. Heuristic teaching serves as a key tool for sparking creativity. Teachers should avoid rigid commands like “Raise your hand” and instead ask open-ended questions such as: “If you were a tree blown by strong winds, how would you move?” or “How could you use actions to convey the feeling of being elated?” These questions, which have no standard answers, stimulate children’s imagination and problem-solving skills.

4.4. Implementation of process-oriented “observation-support-dialogue” teaching interaction

In creativity-oriented teaching, interactive models should shift from a “teaching-receiving” approach to a cyclical process of “observation-support-dialogue” focused on creative development. Observation serves as the foundational step, requiring teachers to adopt a researcher’s perspective, quietly observing children’s natural expressions during free dance or play activities. They should document creative moments, repetitive movement patterns, and responses to challenges rather than rushing to correct or direct. For instance, noticing a child frequently curling up and rolling may become valuable material for later guiding their creation of “seed” or “hedgehog” dances. Only through meticulous observation can teachers provide precise support, not as replacements but as scaffolding. When children encounter creative blocks, teachers can offer inspirational prompts like: “Try this blue fabric, could it help you express the ocean?” For monotonous movements, incorporating parallel play with varied demonstrations helps: “Your bird flies quietly. Look at mine, it sometimes makes sharp turns when encountering lightning!” Dialogue remains central, serving as a bridge for intellectual exchange between teachers and children. This isn’t rigid questioning but equal-minded dialogue. Teachers might describe observed scenarios (“I noticed you suddenly stopped mid-turn, did you have an idea?”) or share personal insights (“Your forceful stomping felt like a giant walking, so powerful!”), or invite young children to explain their creations (“What do you want to convey through the ending action you designed?”)^[5].

4.5. Establishing a multifaceted evaluation system focused on creative processes and performance

Traditional dance evaluations often focus excessively on movement synchronization and imitation accuracy, which ironically stifles creativity development. The new assessment framework should shift emphasis from “outcomes” to “process and performance.” Evaluations should highlight children’s exploratory spirit, perseverance, problem-solving strategies, and collaborative interactions during creative activities, such as their ability to experiment with different body parts to express rhythm or their willingness to try innovative approaches after initial failures. Avoiding horizontal comparisons, educators should adopt growth portfolios to document each child’s creative breakthroughs and developmental trajectories. This includes collecting unique movement design sketches, documenting verbal descriptions of choreography, and capturing creative dance clips at various stages to visually track progress. Incorporating self-assessment and peer evaluation is crucial. Teachers can guide children to review their dance videos by asking, “Which choreographed move do you like best? Why?” or organize audience discussions like “What stories do you see in their dances?” These practices not only enhance children’s metacognitive skills and aesthetic appreciation but also foster an atmosphere of mutual appreciation and

collective growth. Evaluative language should prioritize descriptive feedback over critical judgments. Instead of saying “You didn’t dance well,” educators might suggest: “Your quick spin conveyed excitement. Adding vertical movements could better express that emotional intensity.” Such evaluations indicate the continuous growth of creativity, thereby enabling every young child to gain confidence.

5. Conclusion

In kindergarten dance education, fostering creativity not only stimulates children’s imagination and self-expression abilities but also enhances their problem-solving skills and innovative thinking, promoting holistic development. Dance instruction should explore innovative teaching strategies, including creating open dance environments, designing themes aligned with children’s life experiences, adopting diverse heuristic teaching methods, implementing process-oriented interactive teaching, and establishing multifaceted evaluation systems that focus on creative processes. By allowing children to express their innate talents and unleash potential through dance, we can inject continuous innovative momentum into their future growth.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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