

Exploration of Dance Choreography Course in Colleges and Universities in the Context of Curriculum Civics

Wenjia Yang

College of Art, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua 321004, Zhejiang, China

Abstract: *With the full integration of the curriculum civics education concept into the college teaching system, as an important part of art education, the dance choreography course is faced with the urgent need for the innovation of teaching concepts, the optimization of teaching content, and the innovation of teaching methods. This paper focuses on the teaching of college dance choreography courses in the context of curriculum civics, analyzes the necessity of integrating curriculum civics into dance choreography teaching, points out the problems existing in the teaching of college dance choreography courses, and discusses the innovative strategies for integrating curriculum civics into college dance choreography teaching from the aspects of teaching concepts, teaching content, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. It aims to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for cultivating dance choreography talents with both professional skills and noble ideological and moral qualities, and promote the organic unity of educational objectives and educational functions of dance choreography courses in the new era.*

Keywords: Curriculum civics, Colleges and universities, Dance choreography courses, Teaching exploration, Talent cultivation.

1. Introduction

With the state placing significant emphasis on ideological and political education in higher education, curriculum civics has emerged as a pivotal reform direction in the educational landscape. As a core component of the art education system in colleges and universities, choreography courses not only bear the responsibility of teaching professional choreographic skills but also shoulder the critical mission of shaping students' correct values and cultivating their sense of social responsibility and national sentiment. Integrating curriculum civics into choreography teaching is not only a fundamental requirement to answer the call of national education policies but also an inherent necessity to enhance the comprehensive quality of choreographic talent and foster the healthy development of dance art.

2. The Necessity of Curriculum Civics to be Integrated into the Teaching of Choreography in Colleges and Universities

2.1 The Need to Implement the Fundamental Task of Establishing Morality in Students

Colleges and universities serve as the core hubs and cradles for cultivating high-quality talent in a nation, consistently shouldering the profound mission of nurturing virtuous and capable builders for the Party and the country. The philosophy of educating students with moral integrity permeates the entire educational process in higher education institutions. This is not only the fundamental task of college education but also a critical criterion for measuring its quality.

Within the college education system, choreography courses hold a unique and significant position. Using dance—a highly contagious art form—as a carrier, these courses build a bridge to convey ideological connotations and values through the creation and performance of dance works. Dance choreography is far more than a simple accumulation of

movements and stage arrangements; it embodies the creator's perceptions of the world, life, and social phenomena. Every designed dance movement, each piece of musical rhythm, and the use of stage lighting carry specific emotions and ideas.

Incorporating civic education into dance choreography teaching allows students to receive ideological and political education while learning professional skills. This process helps them establish correct worldviews, life outlooks, and values, cultivates their sense of social responsibility and mission, and truly achieves the goal of fostering talents with both moral integrity and artistic excellence.

2.2 Requirements for Enrichment of the Dance Choreography Programme

Dance choreography courses represent a comprehensive discipline integrating art, culture, and technology, with rich and diversified connotations. Superficially, they focus on technical aspects such as the meticulous choreography of dance movements and the ingenious conception of stage design—foundational elements for presenting dance works.

However, upon deeper exploration, choreography courses should focus on the cultural spirit and ideas conveyed by dance works, as this is the key to creating pieces that transcend time and space to touch people's hearts. In the context of globalization, where diverse cultures collide and intermingle, dance art faces both opportunities and challenges of diversified development. If dance choreography courses remain solely at the technical level while neglecting the cultural connotations and ideological values of works, the resulting dance pieces are likely to be superficial and lack vitality. Integrating civic education into the curriculum can inject new vitality and depth into dance choreography, enabling works to embody national and contemporary spirits, and enhancing their cultural value and social impact.

2.3 Adapting to the Diversified Needs of Society for Choreographers

With the rapid development and advancement of society, the art of dance has gradually expanded from traditional stage performances into various aspects of social life, emerging as a vital force in promoting social and cultural construction and enriching people's spiritual lives. Against this backdrop, the social demands for choreographers have also undergone profound transformations. These demands are no longer confined to exceptional professional skills but now impose more comprehensive and stringent requirements on their overall qualities. Integrating civic education into dance choreography teaching represents a robust initiative to adapt to society's diverse needs for choreographers. During the teaching process, by introducing ideological and political education content, it aims to cultivate students' ideological and moral qualities, sense of social responsibility, and teamwork spirit, enabling them to enhance both their professional skills and comprehensive qualities simultaneously. Choreographers and directors trained in this way will not only possess the ability to create outstanding dance works with refined skills in their future careers but also engage in social and cultural construction with a proactive mindset. They will leverage the positive societal role of dance art, ensuring it continues to thrive and evolve alongside societal development while radiating new brilliance. Ultimately, they will contribute their wisdom and strength to societal prosperity and progress.

3. Problems in the Teaching of Dance Choreography Courses in Colleges and Universities

3.1 Insufficient Knowledge of the Concept of Curriculum Civics

In the teaching of dance choreography at colleges and universities, some instructors only have a superficial understanding of the concept of curriculum civics, failing to fully appreciate its significance in cultivating dance choreography professionals. They predominantly view choreography teaching as a technical discipline, believing that the core of instruction lies in imparting professional skills, such as dance movement composition techniques, stage arrangement methods, and music rhythm mastery. In the process, they overlook the excavation and dissemination of the ideological values and cultural connotations inherent in dance works.

Moreover, constrained by their limited knowledge of curriculum civics, certain teachers often struggle to provide in-depth and accurate responses to students' inquiries regarding the ideological connotations of dance pieces. In some cases, they may even resort to evasion or perfunctory answers. This not only dampens students' enthusiasm for learning choreography courses but also hinders the overall enhancement of their comprehensive qualities. As a result, it becomes difficult to nurture choreographers who possess high moral standards, a strong sense of social responsibility, and profound cultural literacy.

3.2 Insufficiently Diversified Ways of Exploring and Integrating the Elements of Ideology and Politics.

In the realm of excavating civic and political elements, certain

educators lack systematic depth, often resorting to generic, surface-level perspectives to identify such elements. This approach results in excavated civic and political content that lacks both novelty and profundity. Concurrently, when integrating these elements, some teachers employ rigid, formulaic methods devoid of flexibility or innovation. They typically rely on direct didactic approaches, forcefully inserting civic-political content into curricula, which creates a disconnect between civic-political education and dance choreography/direction instruction. This disjointed integration feels artificial, akin to "two separate entities" rather than a cohesive whole. Additionally, some instructors fail to fully account for the unique characteristics of dance choreography courses or students' professional needs when incorporating civic-political elements, neglecting to closely align these elements with practical applications such as dance creation and performance.

3.3 Lack of Innovative Teaching Methods

In the realm of college dance choreography instruction, certain educators persist in relying on traditional teaching methodologies, demonstrating a dearth of modern pedagogical concepts, as well as the application and innovation of teaching techniques. This approach invariably yields subpar teaching outcomes. Traditional teaching often centers around the instructor, with teachers assuming a dominant role in the classroom. They typically employ a didactic, one-way teaching style, dispensing knowledge according to a pre-established curriculum sequence. As a result, students are reduced to passive recipients of information, deprived of opportunities for active engagement and critical thinking.

When it comes to teaching dance movements, many teachers habitually adopt a demonstration-based approach, where the instructor showcases the dance steps while students mimic and learn. However, during the demonstration process, some teachers exclusively concentrate on the precision of the movements, overlooking the individual disparities among students. This oversight means that students with weaker foundational skills struggle to keep pace with the teaching progression, and over time, they gradually lose their enthusiasm for learning.

3.4 Inadequate Evaluation System

In the teaching of college dance choreography courses, the evaluation systems designed by some teachers are failing to comprehensively and objectively gauge students' learning outcomes and overall competencies. In terms of evaluation content, the existing systems overly emphasize the assessment of students' dance-related professional skills, such as the standardization of dance movements, technical proficiency, and stage performance expressiveness. Meanwhile, they neglect to evaluate students' engagement with the civic and political content integrated within the curriculum. Regarding evaluation methods, some educators still rely on traditional summative assessment approaches. They predominantly base students' final grades on end-of-term exams or the outcomes of work demonstrations, ignoring the need for dynamic evaluation of the learning process. Such an assessment model fails to offer timely feedback on students'

challenges and shortcomings during learning, thereby hindering students from promptly adjusting their study strategies and enhancing their academic performance.

4. Innovative Strategies for Curriculum Civics Integration into Dance Choreography Teaching in Colleges and Universities

4.1 Updating Teaching Concepts and Strengthening Awareness of Curriculum Civics

As a vital component of art education, the dance choreography major in colleges and universities shoulders the critical mission of cultivating dance art talents with both exceptional technical proficiency and noble character. To enhance the teaching quality of choreography and achieve the goal of nurturing students with both moral integrity and artistic excellence, educators must proactively update their pedagogical mindsets, strengthen their awareness of curriculum-based civic and political education, and promote the deep integration of such education into choreography instruction by transforming teaching concepts and embedding ideological and political elements.

Firstly, innovate teaching concepts. Teachers should fully recognize that curriculum civic and political education is not merely an appended component of the curriculum but a fundamental issue impacting the quality and orientation of talent cultivation. Simultaneously, educators must take the initiative to abandon the traditional separation between professional skills training and ideological-political education, instead establishing a “holistic ideological-political education” philosophy that integrates ethics with artistry.

Secondly, conduct deep excavation and integration. Teachers need keen insight and profound cultural literacy to actively explore the ideological and political elements inherent in dance choreography courses. When exploring ideological and political elements, teachers should emphasize systematic analysis, comprehensively examining a dance’s subject matter, theme, emotional expression, artistic style, and other dimensions.

Taking “choreography technique” instruction as an example, educators can excavate ideological and political elements across multiple layers to achieve the organic integration of technical teaching and values-based education. In theme selection, teachers can guide students to focus on traditional national narratives and contemporary heroic stories. For instance, using the ancient myth of “Jingwei Filling the Sea” as a choreographic theme allows students to internalize Jingwei’s spirit of perseverance and courage, cultivating resilience in the face of challenges. In theme development, teachers can integrate values such as unity, cooperation, dedication, and commitment. When teaching group choreography techniques, for example, instructors can emphasize the relationship between the individual and the collective, helping students understand that only through mutual collaboration and shared effort can they create a compelling dance work. This approach not only enhances technical proficiency but also subtly fosters a sense of collective responsibility and teamwork.

4.2 Deepening the Exploration of Civics Elements and Innovating Integration Approaches

In college dance choreography education, the depth of curriculum-based civic and political education is pivotal to cultivating dance talents with both moral integrity and artistic excellence. Civic and political elements serve as the core carriers of such education, and the effectiveness of their excavation and integration directly impacts teaching outcomes. Therefore, educators must proactively deepen the exploration of ideological and political elements while innovating integration methods, ensuring that civic and political education in dance choreography teaching becomes as seamless as “salt dissolved in water”—subtle yet pervasive. This approach aims to achieve the simultaneous enhancement of students’ professional skills and ideological-political literacy.

Firstly, excavate diverse civic elements. College dance choreography instructors must possess broad perspectives and profound cultural literacy to explore ideological and political elements in the curriculum across multiple dimensions, thereby providing rich content support for curriculum-based civic education. From the dimension of cultural inheritance, dance serves as a vital carrier of culture, embodying rich national spirit and traditional values. Teachers should delve into the dance cultures of different ethnic groups and regions to uncover traditional virtues such as unity and cooperation, diligence and courage, and respect for the elderly and care for the young embedded within them. From the dimension of artistic aesthetics, dance art possesses unique aesthetic value, from which teachers can extract ideological and political elements through its aesthetic characteristics. Elements such as dance rhythm, rhyme, and movement not only offer aesthetic pleasure but also embody the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. By guiding students to appreciate and analyze outstanding dance works, teachers can help them cultivate correct aesthetic concepts, enhance their ability to perceive and appreciate beauty, and thus steer them toward pursuing a positive, healthy, and beautiful attitude toward life. This process subtly integrates values education with artistic literacy, allowing students to internalize spiritual pursuits through aesthetic experience.

Secondly, innovate integration methods. Teachers can adopt a combination of implicit and explicit education to naturally infuse ideological and political elements into every facet of dance choreography instruction. In classroom teaching, educators can guide students to reflect on the ideological connotations of dance works through case analyses and work appreciation. For example, dissecting the historical context or cultural symbolism of a piece prompts students to engage with its deeper meanings beyond technical execution.

In practical creation, teachers should encourage students to integrate ideological and political themes into choreographic concepts, using dance movements, stage design, and other expressive tools to vividly and imaginatively convey these ideas. This transforms abstract values into tangible artistic narratives.

In extracurricular activities, organizing students to participate in social welfare performances or rural cultural events allows

them to experience the social value of dance art firsthand. Such practices cultivate a sense of social responsibility and mission by connecting artistic skills to real-world impact. Taking “Choreography and Direction Creation” as an example, teachers can weave ideological and political exploration into every stage of the creative process—from concept development to final performance—ensuring the organic unity of professional skill development and value shaping.

During the creative theme-conception stage, teachers can guide students to draw inspiration from social realities and cultural heritage. For instance, taking “Rural Revitalization” as the theme, teachers can assign students to investigate the current status of rural culture, ecology, and industrial development, prompting them to explore embedded ideological and political elements such as solidarity and mutual aid, ecological protection, and innovation-driven progress. Through on-site visits and literary research, students understand how the Rural Revitalization strategy contributes to national rejuvenation, translating the general requirements of “thriving industries, ecological livability, civilised rural customs, effective governance, and prosperous lives” into the core theme of their dance creations.

In character development and plot design, teachers should prioritize guiding students to embody moral ethics and humanistic care. For instance, when crafting works themed around “doctor-patient relationships,” educators can help students shape the image of a dedicated physician and a resilient, optimistic patient. Through dance movements, they can illustrate the trust and support between these roles, conveying the values of “life first, people first.” The plot can incorporate profound reflections on the dignity of life and professional ethics, transforming the dance into a vehicle for promoting socialist core values. This approach ensures that artistic creation not only showcases technical proficiency but also serves as a medium for ideological and moral education, merging aesthetic expression with civic responsibility.

4.3 Innovative Teaching Methods to Stimulate Students' Learning Initiatives.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the integration of curriculum civics and professional skills training, teachers need to actively innovate teaching methods, fully mobilise students' learning initiative, so as to enable students to change from “passive learning” to “active learning”, and achieve the double enhancement of choreography skills and civic literacy in active exploration and practice. Choreography skills and ideological and political literacy can be enhanced in the process of active exploration and practice.

Firstly, project-based pedagogy. Teachers can take the actual dance choreography project as a carrier, and integrate the objectives of curriculum civics into the project tasks. Students work in groups to create the project, and participate in the whole process from topic planning, choreography to stage presentation. During the implementation of the project, teachers can guide students to pay attention to social needs, cultural heritage and other issues, and cultivate students' teamwork spirit, creative thinking ability and sense of social responsibility. Secondly, online and offline hybrid teaching

method. Teachers can make use of modern information technology to build a dance choreography teaching platform that combines online and offline. Provide rich teaching resources online, including case videos and academic lectures on the integration of Civics elements into the teaching of dance choreography, etc., so that students can learn independently. Lecture and practical guidance activities are carried out offline, and teachers provide timely answers and guidance to the problems encountered by students in the learning process. Through online and offline hybrid teaching, teachers can expand the teaching space and time, and improve the efficiency and quality of teaching. Taking the teaching of “History of Chinese Dance” as an example, teachers can build a dual-track teaching mode of “historical situation + realistic proposition”. Teachers can build a “Digital Dance Museum” online, restore Dunhuang mural music and dance scenes through 3D modelling, dynamically analyse Song Dynasty dance scores and other resources, and require students to complete virtual choreography of specified historical segments with VR technology. Offline, teachers can conduct a “historical facts deciphering workshop”, where students are grouped together to receive research tasks such as the mystery of the loss of the “Melody of White Feathers Garment” and “the evolution of Ming and Qing opera dance”, and deciphering the historical code by consulting ancient documents and observing archaeological images.

In the creative process, teachers can direct students to transform historical research into realistic expression, such as creating environmental protection themed works based on Shang and Zhou ritual music and dance, and reconstructing anti-epidemic group dances with the military formation scheduling of the Tang Dynasty's “Music for Breaking the Formation”, which requires students to embody a three-dimensional fusion in movement design, costumes and props, and musical selections - the accurate reproduction of historical vocabulary, the contemporary transformation of traditional aesthetics, and the implicit infiltration of core values. In this process, teachers can set up a “Civic Element Transformation Worksheet” to record the trajectory of thought mapping from historical events to real creations, and collect feedback through the “Audience Empathy Test” to form an iterative process of “creation - reflection - re-creation”. The feedback will be collected through the “audience empathy test”, forming a closed loop of “creation-reflection- re-creation”.

4.4 Improving the Evaluation System to Ensure the Effectiveness of Curriculum Civics Implementation

Firstly, build a diversified evaluation index system. Teachers can establish an evaluation index system covering multiple dimensions such as professional skills, civic and political literacy, and innovation ability. In terms of professional skills, teachers should pay attention to the evaluation of artistic and innovative aspects of choreography works. In the aspect of civic literacy, teachers should examine students' understanding of the content of curriculum civics, the shaping of values and the cultivation of social responsibility. In terms of creative ability, teachers should evaluate students' innovative thinking and practical ability in choreography creation. Secondly, adopting diversified evaluation subjects, teachers can introduce diversified evaluation subjects such as

students' self-assessment, mutual assessment and social assessment. Students' self-assessment can prompt them to reflect on the learning process and improve their self-knowledge. Students' mutual evaluation can promote communication and learning among students and broaden the perspective of evaluation. Social evaluation can invite industry experts and audiences to evaluate the choreography works to understand the influence and recognition of the works in the society and make the evaluation results more objective and comprehensive. Taking the teaching of "Body Language Interpretation" as an example, teachers can integrate the elements of civic and political thinking into the various dimensions of the evaluation system, and create a closed loop of evaluation in the form of "skill cognition-cultural understanding-value transmission". In terms of professional skills, teachers can design a "body language analysis report", which requires students to analyse the technical characteristics of specific dance vocabularies from the perspective of anatomy and dynamics, and at the same time examine their ability to verify the historical origin of movements. In terms of civic and political literacy, teachers can set up a special evaluation of "cultural identity" to test students' practice of the cultural concept of "Cherish one's own beauty and respect other's beauty" by comparing the differences in body expressions in different cultural contexts. For example, when analysing the comparison between the body language of Intore and Ballet, the focus is on whether students can transcend the superficial differences and explain the different interpretations of the "aesthetics of strength" and its social roots in the two cultures. In the dimension of creative ability, teachers can introduce the practical task of "body language reconstruction", which requires students to create dance phrases with depth of thought based on contemporary social issues, and evaluate their ability to transform traditional vocabulary into modern narratives.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the deepened practice of integrating civic education into college dance choreography curricula represents an innovative exploration in the new era for the synergistic cultivation of art education and ideological-political education. By updating teaching concepts, excavating ideological-political elements, innovating teaching methodologies, and refining evaluation systems, dance choreography instruction can transcend the limitations of pure skill-based teaching, evolving into a vital vehicle for cultivating students' national sentiment, cultural self-confidence, and social responsibility. Only through such approaches can we genuinely foster a new generation of dance professionals who "embody dance ethics and convey artistic voices". This will enable Chinese dance to remain firmly rooted in Chinese cultural positioning, serving as a vivid medium for telling Chinese stories and spreading Chinese spirit, while injecting robust momentum into the construction of a culturally strong nation.

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