

Implementation and Exploration of Senior High School Dance Appreciation Courses from the Perspective of Aesthetic Education

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Abstract: Against the macro-level background of global reform in arts education and China's new-era strategy for aesthetic education, this study focuses on practical innovation in senior high school dance appreciation courses in China. Taking Grade 10 students as the research participants, it examines their cognitive characteristics and the mechanism through which dance aesthetic education can be aligned with their developmental needs. Based on a review of international and Chinese reforms in aesthetic education, and drawing on questionnaire survey data and case analysis, the study identifies three major problems in current dance-related aesthetic education courses: an imbalance between classicality and contemporaneity in teaching content, which makes it difficult to meet students' transitional cognitive needs; a continuing reliance on traditional lecturing, which limits students' kinesthetic perception and emotional expression; and a single-dimensional evaluation model that lacks dynamic assessment of aesthetic internalization. Accordingly, this study proposes a three-in-one optimization framework. In terms of content, it has established a tripartite structure of classical, modern and local dance resources; in terms of pedagogy, it has created a spiral path of viewing, analysis and creation; and in terms of assessment, it has built a multidimensional system of cognition, skills and affect. The optimized framework will promote students' artistic participation and critical thinking, provide a good model for implementing Grade 10 aesthetic education courses, correct the lack of process-oriented evaluation, offer theoretical and practical support for the revision of China's senior secondary school arts curriculum standards, and promote the integration of dance education with core competencies.

Keywords: Senior High School Dance Appreciation Course; Aesthetic Education; Dance Appreciation Competence; Aesthetic Literacy.

1. Introduction

With the spread of the whole-child development idea in global education, aesthetic education has gradually entered the forefront of high-quality education and is now highly valued. Dance has an outstanding beauty, deep cultural connotations and an emotional expression feature, and is now also used to teach in schools. In accordance with the demands of China's Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan, aesthetic education at the senior high school level is being promoted systematically. At this time, students have developed some specific physiological and psychological characteristics; their cognitive ability is growing rapidly, and they have begun to form an aesthetic sense. Therefore, through organized analysis of works in this course, students can develop their sense of aesthetics and learn more about art, thereby achieving the goals of aesthetic education.

In recent years, Chinese scholars have explored the aesthetic-educational functions of senior high school dance appreciation courses from many sides. In teaching practice, researchers have advocated for the construction of situations, cross-curricular collaboration, and all sorts of teaching methods to foster students' aesthetic and creative literacy [1], as well as employing new technologies to strengthen students' scientific literacy in dance as a physical art [2]. Educationally speaking, some scholars have proposed that courses in dance appreciation can boost students' aesthetic literacy and sense of culture [3, 4], reduce academic stress for students, and promote their love for culture. At the policy and theoretical

levels, the three main directions of research that have been established in previous studies are the history of aesthetic education, its practice, and its educational functions [5]. At the same time, many scholars have also proposed various directions for improving the educational system through aesthetic education [6]. International senior high school dance appreciation courses focus more on practice and cultural critique, on the other hand. Models that integrate appreciation and creation are being used in Europe to help students better understand the connotations of dance [7]. In North America, projects are used to teach students about life and other areas in an all-encompassing way [8]. At the theoretical level, relevant studies have proposed appreciation competence models covering aesthetic perception, cultural decoding and critical reflection, and advocate for process-oriented evaluation [9]. Other studies have constructed micro-course models according to instructional theories and used digital technology to optimize the learning experience and promote independent study [10]. Others are also based on the theory of aesthetic education, emphasize aesthetic experience and social criticism, and highlight the humanistic value of dance appreciation [11]. The above studies provide some references for the reform of dance aesthetic education courses in China.

Based on the above reasons, 120 Grade 10 students from three classes at Senior High School A in Fujian Province, China, were selected for this study and a 10-week teaching practice was conducted. A varied model of dance-work appreciation was used in the study. The teaching contents included classical dance, ethnic and folk dance, modern dance, and ballet; to improve the quality of the course through

systematic teaching intervention and to foster students' aesthetic literacy and all-round abilities. To assess the results of the intervention and gather feedback, a 15-item questionnaire was created that included items on course interest, teaching effectiveness, activity preference, teaching content, opportunity for practice, overall evaluation, ability development, suggestions for improvement, willingness to create, academic workload and expectations for course optimization. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, and 117 valid responses were collected; thus, the actual collection rate was 97.5%. The obtained data served to support the conclusions of this paper. Add a study of cases based on the literature review. A review of the relevant studies has been conducted to provide the theoretical basis for aesthetic education and to explore how aesthetic education can be incorporated into dance courses in order to design a course. Case studies of teaching materials such as Swan Lake, the Dai peacock dance, and Silk Road and Flower Rain were conducted, and based on the physical and psychological characteristics of Grade 10 students and the goals of aesthetic education, course content adjustments were made. Finally, the study constructed a closed-loop research system linking theory, practice and evaluation, and sought to improve aesthetic ability, deepen cultural understanding, develop expressive competence and stimulate the will to create.

2. Theoretical Relationship Between Aesthetic Education and Senior High School Dance Appreciation Courses

In the construction of contemporary global aesthetic education systems and the advancement of China's quality-oriented education strategy, senior high school dance appreciation courses function as a key carrier for implementing aesthetic education. Their fundamental value lies in cultivating students' aesthetic perception, cultural cognition, and value judgment through the art of dance. Based on the cognitive developmental stage of Grade 10 students, dance aesthetic education should establish a scientific teaching system that both inherits fine traditional Chinese culture and promotes contemporary innovation in teaching content, thereby aligning the goals of aesthetic education with students' cognitive development.

2.1. Core Connotations of Aesthetic Education and the Logic of Curriculum Transformation

In light of the trend of reform in the field of aesthetics around the world and the policy directions of China's new era aesthetic education, relevant educational documents have set higher standards and provided more systematic requirements for aesthetic education. As a fundamental general education course at the senior high school level, Dance Appreciation is needed to foster students' artistic appreciation, aesthetic sense and all-round humanistic literacy. The classroom should be organized in a step-by-step manner, adopt the goals of aesthetic education as its guiding principle, and take the appreciation of classical dance works as the main form to enhance students' experience of the aesthetic qualities of dance. Therefore, senior high school dance appreciation courses can build a three-dimensional goal system of perception, cognition and values and create an all-encompassing educational pathway [2]. First of all, dynamic imagery in dance is used as a carrier for multiple modes of

perception at the perceptual level. It will be free from the limitations of traditional audiovisual education and promote the development of students' kinesthetic empathy and rhythmic aesthetic sensitivity. Secondly, in terms of cognition, the cultural symbols of ethnic dance can also serve as channels for cross-cultural understanding and communication to help students form a cognitive connection between body language and culture. Thirdly, at the level of values, dance achieves value guidance through emotional narrative and undertakes the basic task of cultivating virtue in education, as well as meeting the educational demands of aesthetic education.

2.2. Cognitive Characteristics of Grade 10 Students and the Adaptability of Dance Aesthetic Education

Grade 10 students are in the early stage of the formal operational period. They are learning to think abstractly but have not achieved this yet. Thus, the course design should offer scaffold cognitive support to guide students from concrete experience to abstract knowledge. At the same time, with the growth of self-awareness during adolescence, people are also eager to find beauty. Therefore, the teaching should be based on the idea of "taking tradition as a foundation and introducing modernity in practice"; at the same time, classical dance can be employed to foster students' cultural literacy, and new forms of expression may be incorporated to provoke their intellectual interest. For instance, in Silk Road and Flower Rain, the "pipa-playing-behind-the-back" posture can be used to help students develop a sense of aesthetic standards for classical harmony. In conjunction with digital animation to show the evolution of dance postures, we can also help people better understand the continuation of traditional culture. Similarly, in teaching Yugur dance, teachers can integrate the history of grassland nomadism and other living customs to help students learn that dance originated from productive labor and ethnic customs, and as a result, developed corresponding styles and movement patterns [3]. Given the exchange of dance cultures in the world today, comparing ethnic dance and modern dance in teaching can help students learn to recognize the differences in cultural character between the two forms, grasp how traditional elements are presented in modern times, enhance their sense of cultural self-confidence, and expand their aesthetic awareness of the world.

3. Construction of Aesthetic-Education-Oriented Curriculum Implementation Strategies

The construction of senior high school dance appreciation courses should take the value of aesthetic education as its core criterion and align with high-quality global arts education standards. Through the systematic selection and organization of teaching content, the innovation of teaching methods, and the establishment of an evaluation system, such courses can effectively enhance students' aesthetic perception, cultural understanding, and creative thinking. These efforts provide a complete theoretical framework and practical measures for the implementation of senior high school dance appreciation courses in China.

3.1. Selection and Design of Curriculum Content

In terms of aesthetic education and global arts education, the selection of works for senior high school dance appreciation courses should meet the "three-in-one" standard of artistic quality, cultural diversity and educational suitability. Appreciation is the gradual increase of feelings. The students' main motivation for learning is their own interest and the cultural attractiveness of the works. Therefore, the selected works should be in line with the students' physical and mental development and stimulate their aesthetic emotions. Grade 10 students are in the early stage of formal operational thinking; their minds and bodies are gradually maturing, and they may be prone to rebellious behaviour. Following the trend of society, some students have been overly enthralled by popular dances. At the same time, there may be significant academic pressure, insufficient time for art classes, and poor posture due to long hours of sitting. Therefore, dance education can be used to help all students' bodies and minds grow [4]. The content of the Grade 10 dance appreciation course should be in line with the goals of aesthetic education and contain new and interesting teaching activities. Traditional appreciation courses have been too focused on background knowledge and theory in recent years and have failed to attract students. Therefore, the content should be exemplary and inspiring. Linear aesthetics in classical dance, such as the 'Tage', and virtual-real spatial structures in Cloud Gate Dance Theatre's 'Water Moon' are examples. By comparison, students can gradually form an all-encompassing system of dance. In teaching practice, a multi-modal participation mechanism may be used: first, after viewing the work, aesthetic interaction should be carried out promptly to deepen students' understanding; second, classroom summaries should be used to organize knowledge and enhance aesthetic comprehension; and third, practical platforms can be established for students to participate in creation, rehearsal and performance.

3.2. Innovation and Application of Teaching Methods

First, integrate visual and auditory teaching. Multi-modal teaching of dance appreciation for senior high school students can improve their sense of aesthetics through the combination of sound, pictures and movement. Act III of the ballet Swan Lake can be taken as an example, and a teacher may use 4K video and Dolby Atmos sound to create an immersive environment, combine slow-motion analysis with spectrum-analysis software, and visually present the bodily control of the Black Swan's fouetté turns alongside sound-pressure changes in the symphonic music. Guided questions can be used to discover the impact of a high technical difficulty in music on a person's emotions. According to the interviews, 87 per cent of the students had just begun to understand the relationship between dance technique and musical symbols, and 90 per cent had recognized the dramatic effect of timpani rests on frozen postures of dancers. At the same time, the course can also be extended to embodied learning. For example, in the lesson on Riverdance, students can wear wireless headphones and move according to the music, comparing their own movement rhythm with that of the dancers in the video. Based on the students' feedback, they felt a different sense of body movement when it was in harmony with the music rather than just copying it.

Second, create and utilize dance environments. Multi-

modal situations can be used in the teaching of the Dai peacock dance to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of cultural codes. Projections and sound effects can be employed to build a rainforest environment, and teachers and students can wear ethnic costumes and use props to create a multi-sensory immersive classroom. Based on cultural anthropology, the teacher can explain the connection between the legend of the Peacock Princess and the worship of the Kinnari divine bird, as well as interpret the aesthetic similarity between the typical "three-bend" posture and the stilt-style buildings of the Dai people. Then the students will create ecological narratives to make peacock movements body metaphors for ecological civilization. In this class, 85% of the students could connect dance movements with geographical and ecological knowledge, and their cultural literacy has also improved. Many kinds of interactive modes can be used to promote communication and cooperation, such as group-based dance creation activities to encourage collaboration and innovation skills, and themed discussions where students can share their personal aesthetic experiences. Situational reconstruction can create a living scene to help children learn about and feel the works of art better through their senses.

Third, increase the extent of interactive teaching and group collaboration. A three-stage interactive model can be constructed for the appreciation teaching of Silk Road and Flower Rain: cultural decoding, collaborative creation, and finally multidimensional exhibition and evaluation. This model has created a new teaching system. In the first stage, multimedia resources are used to present scenes from Dunhuang and let students observe the original mural pictures, such as the "pipa-playing-behind-the-back" posture, in an immersive way. Next, the following three groups will be investigated: Laban analysis of Feitian movements; Evolution of mural pattern motifs into dance-drama costume motifs; and Relationship between music and dance rhythm. A Creative Workshop Model will be used in the second stage. Students collect posture data using motion-capture technology, organize the movements into a short sequence, and then reconstruct historical scenes along the Silk Road with frozen images. All the Feitian images created by the groups will be shown on a screen to achieve a virtual-and-real art style. Therefore, the teaching should focus on fostering students' active participation and interaction. Teachers can demonstrate and lead movement decomposition exercises, incorporate elements of choreography, music and emotion, etc., to help students deepen their aesthetic experience through practice. They should also have the students think about the process of creation and extend cooperation outside the classroom by using online platforms for communication and sharing to complete more difficult works together.

3.3. Construction of the Teaching Evaluation System

To improve the quality of aesthetic education and meet the demand for dance education assessment around the world, dance appreciation courses in China need to build a system of four-dimensional evaluation indices based on aesthetic perception, emotional experience, cultural understanding and technical analysis. Students' appreciation abilities should be comprehensively evaluated in terms of dance morphology and aesthetics, emotional narrative, cultural connotations, and the use of professional terminology to provide a scientific basis for individualized teaching. At the same time, several

types of assessments should be used, such as classroom discussions, written expression, improvisational creation, group performance assignments, and video replay analysis, to evaluate students' cooperation and innovation awareness objectively, enhance their appreciation ability and comprehensive literacy, and achieve the goals of aesthetic education. Set up an effective way to distribute teaching feedback and continuously make adjustments to the course. Through questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation, peer evaluation and external assessments, general information about the effectiveness of teaching, student satisfaction and learning difficulties will be obtained, shortcomings in teaching identified, and the feasibility of teaching materials determined. Based on the above, the teaching content and methods will be optimized; target activities, such as thematic presentations and seminars, will be added; internationally excellent teaching cases will be incorporated to enrich course resources, and a student-centered orientation of the course will be promoted. Through continuous reflection and practice, teaching methods and the quality of teaching can be improved; an efficient and creative classroom atmosphere can be created; teachers' professional development can be promoted; and students can have a high-quality learning experience.

4. Practical Effects and Reflections on Senior High School Dance Appreciation Courses

Senior high school dance appreciation courses are of great significance for improving students' artistic literacy and aesthetic ability. Through systematic teaching and practical activities, students achieved certain progress in work interpretation, creative presentation, and aesthetic literacy. However, several problems remained in practice, including insufficient practical teaching, weak cultural decoding ability, and limitations in teaching strategies. This section analyzes issues related to students' appreciation competence and aesthetic literacy development, and proposes improvement measures and suggestions to support the optimized development of senior high school dance appreciation courses in China.

4.1. Improvement of Students' Dance Appreciation Competence

Table 1. Do you think the dance appreciation course is helpful for improving aesthetic ability?

Option	Percentage
A. Very helpful	43.7%
B. Somewhat helpful	38.0%
C. Slightly helpful	13.7%
D. Not helpful	4.6%

An empirical study of a Grade 10 dance appreciation course showed that students' artistic analytical ability improved significantly (Table 1). More than 80% of students reported progress in interpreting the emotions and cultural connotations of dance works. Students could accurately identify the technical features and narrative metaphors in Swan Lake, interpret the symbolic meanings of The Rite of Spring and engage in critical reflection, and independently compare the morphological relationship between the three-

bend posture of the peacock dance and stilt-style architecture. These outcomes not only improved students' aesthetic literacy and cultural identity, but also indicated that the course successfully implemented the aesthetic education goal of cultivating students through beauty in schools worldwide.

The Grade 10 dance appreciation course provided students with a favorable platform. Many students actively participated in improvisation and small-scale choreography projects, demonstrating strong creative and expressive abilities (Table 2). Approximately 75% of students expressed willingness to participate in creative performance. In team assignments, they integrated creativity into collaboration. Various dance activities enhanced students' confidence, provided opportunities for self-presentation, exercised their dance-related skills, and improved their cooperative communication abilities. Some students continued in-depth creative work outside class, accumulated experience and gained recognition in competitions and performances, and a group of students with strong interest in dance achieved further growth.

Table 2. Are you willing to participate in creative presentations in the dance appreciation course?

Option	Percentage
A. Very willing	40.3%
B. Willing	35.0%
C. Uncertain	14.4%
D. Unwilling	10.3%

These data indicate that the dance appreciation course effectively improved students' artistic participation and creativity through a closed-loop model from appreciation to creation. Given that 75 per cent of the students were willing to engage in creative activities, this suggests that the main direction of the globally promoted arts education curriculum has been achieved, and constructivist pedagogy has also had an impact. However, 10.3 per cent of the students were still psychologically resistant to creation. Therefore, one can be given anonymity and smaller tasks to reduce stress. Some works also had the problems of an illogical narrative and off-topic movement. Subsequent teaching will, therefore, strengthen the logical link between cultural symbols and movement coding and address students' diverse interests.

4.2. Cultivation of Students' Aesthetic Literacy

The system of dance appreciation teaching is responsible for building aesthetic cognition. Through systematic courses and multi-modal practice, students' aesthetic judgment can develop in many ways (Table 3). About 79% of the students thought that the dance appreciation class had changed their aesthetic cognitive mode substantially and learned how to interpret works of art more deeply and form a global aesthetic consciousness. In learning about classical dance, students can connect the dance to its historical and cultural background and develop a sense of beauty across time. Many works of modern dance are very sensitive to changes in society and have made many new creations. Cross-cultural comparisons helped students build a cognitive system for learning about world dances, recognize the differences in the aesthetics of different cultures, develop critical aesthetic consciousness gradually, and reach the stage of value judgment.

Table 3. Has the dance appreciation course changed your aesthetic cognitive mode?

Option	Percentage
A. Very helpful	41.5%
B. Somewhat helpful	37.3%
C. Slightly helpful	18.0%
D. Not helpful	3.2%

The dance appreciation course helped students improve their sense of aesthetics and find beauty in their daily lives more readily (Table 4). Eighty-four per cent of the students were able to use dance terminology to analyze the features of works and showed that aesthetic education has been continuously improving the all-round quality of the people. Through audiovisual integration, situational performance and group creation, the Grade 10 students were able to study the elements of dance works all-round. Artistically speaking, they could also connect all sorts of art and learn firsthand how music, composition, body movement and emotion are related internally. This multi-modality of aesthetics has also spread to visual and narrative arts, forming a network of aesthetic literacy development. Therefore, a bidirectional transformation mechanism for aesthetic experience and creative practice was used to enhance the students' aesthetic sensitivity and consciousness of artistic innovation in their daily lives effectively.

Table 4. What impact do you think the dance appreciation course has on personal development?

Option	Percentage
A. Improved aesthetic ability	48.7%
B. Enhanced cultural understanding	26.0%
C. Exercised expressive competence	15.3%
D. Stimulated creative enthusiasm	10.0%

Improvement measures should be based on the reasons for the existing problems. A lack of practical activities and difficulty in cultural decoding are correlated; thus, extending class time is unlikely to remedy the situation. Integrate cultural symbol analysis with VR based scene reconstruction to promote a virtuous cycle of theory and practice. Given the collaborative inquiry demands that 80% of the students have put forward, teachers need to change from being knowledge transmitters to being facilitators. Problem-chain design can be employed to inspire students' autonomous exploration. Curriculum optimization should also build an all-weather mechanism of policy, resources and teaching staff. For example, local teaching cases can be co-developed with inheritors of intangible cultural heritage to promote the reform of aesthetic education.

4.3. Existing Problems and Improvement Measures

Observation of the practical results of the Grade 10 dance appreciation course shows that many dimensions of teaching

effectiveness are lacking in practice. About 60 per cent of the students said that the ratio of theory to practice was uneven; that is to say, there was too much theoretical teaching and too little actual practice, and thus the students failed to turn their knowledge into skills; their understanding of dance remained superficial. Around 53.7% of the students had weak cultural decoding abilities and could not link the dance vocabulary to the culture. Teaching focused on technique and neglected culture, and students did not engage in active inquiry either. At the same time, the teaching strategies also had structural deficiencies. Teacher-student interaction was lacking; as a result, 81.5% of the students wished for more interactive teaching and were thus less likely to be creative. The main reasons for these problems are as follows: educational concepts that focus too much on knowledge and skills rather than practical innovation; some teachers lack interdisciplinary and innovative teaching abilities; and insufficient funds in some schools restrict the availability of teaching hardware. To solve the above problems, various practical activities can be used to improve teaching, such as improvisation, combination training and choreography competitions, etc., to foster students' skills and innovative thinking. Invite dance experts to teach and adjust the course content. Interactivity can be added through group discussion and situation-based learning; according to the strengths of the students, they will be given different tasks. At the same time, multimedia and online platforms can be used to expand learning paths and build communication platforms. A dynamic teaching evaluation mechanism should also be established to gather information on classroom teaching, homework, tests, etc., provide timely feedback, continuously adjust the course contents and ways of teaching, optimize resources, and enhance the effectiveness of the class.

5. Conclusion

Based on the theory of aesthetic education and in light of the global development of dance education, this paper systematically studied the cognitive transformation path and practical effect of dance appreciation courses in Chinese senior high schools. According to the above data, the course has benefited the students' aesthetic literacy, dance-text interpretation skills and individual creation abilities in the following ways. It has achieved the aim of integrating theoretical cognition and practical innovation effectively, and has also done well in fostering cross-cultural aesthetic literacy. At the same time, this study has also found that the course is still lacking in many areas, such as opportunities for practice, depth of cultural education, and classroom interaction; these will also need to be addressed. Therefore, the aesthetic-education-oriented curriculum framework built in this study can provide a theoretical reference for related research, and the proposed teaching and evaluation strategies can offer practical support for front-line teaching.

Based on the research results and current issues, the optimization of senior high school dance appreciation courses in the future will need to be multi-dimensional. First, to increase students' participation, add creative presentation and dance practice activities to the forms of practical teaching. Second, deepen the teaching of cultural connotations by incorporating resources such as traditional dance and intangible cultural heritage dance to expand the scope of cultural interpretation and foster students' sense of cultural empathy. Third, introduce new teaching and evaluation methods using digital technology to support teaching and

build a diverse process-oriented evaluation system. Based on the above, dance appreciation should be integrated with multiple disciplines and social aesthetic education resources coordinated to gradually build a senior high school dance aesthetic education curriculum system with Chinese characteristics and promote the all-round development of students' general abilities.

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