

Usage of Creative Dance as a pedagogy forexperiential learning in Indian primary school children.

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Abstract

In Indian schools, Dance is taught as an art form and much as a recreation to students. Aim : The main purpose of this research paper is to highlight the literature that states the benefits of using dance as a pedagogy to teach children in schools. The paper also aims to understand the benefits dance that can be used as an experiential learning among the age group of 5 to 10 years in mainstream CBSE schools in India. Methodology: Many databases were searched including the key words and it was concluded that creative dance as a pedagogy can be used as an experiential learning at schools. Results: The advantages of creative dance in cognition, physical, socio emotional aspects can be observed. Development of creative dance as experiential learning with right assessment parameters can be effective in carrying out the implementation of the curriculum.

Keywords : creative dance, experiential learning, pedagogy, primary school, children

Introduction

Dance is a activity liked by humans of all age groups that is performed as a ritual in all walks of life of our society. Dance has the ability to encourage, modify , support and communicate emotions. As one of the important art forms in the world, Dance allows an individual to sail through expressions, emotions, feelings, rhythm, thoughts and beliefs. Sutherland and Acord (2007) explain how arts allow us to move from situated learning to experiential learning. The dormant learning that takes place in schools often fails to connect the mind and the body. Dance helps in better connection of body with the mind creating a total scope for an integrated approach to learning. With the assimilation of art in education, the child's critical thinking, exploration, probing capabilities for a better and deeper learning of concepts is possible. Dance also intensifies the experiential learning and makes the entire process of learning a joyful and lasting experience. Physical Education (PE) continues to be a foundation subject for primary and secondary school children. PE can be further classified into athletics, swimming, outdoor adventure, games alongside dance.

Summarizing the role of Dance in Indian schools with highlighting the importance of creative dance through a literature review, we discuss our viewpoints to make use of creative dance as experiential learning which benefits the children for a holistic approach to learn thereby broadening the aspect of dance in education.

Role of Dance in Education

The overall development of learners or students depends on aesthetic education that is imparted to them. This has the ability to change and influence the students' feelings, emotions, personality, attitudes, character and thought process. This in turn will ensure a smooth and subtle progress in the students' life. The importance of emotional, spiritual, intellectual wellbeing of the student can be experienced with this. In the present day scenario, the importance of including dance as a pedagogy is yet to be accepted by Schools and Universities in India. There are courses that already exists but problems like unscientific methodology, inability to measure the

outcomes, lack of robust curriculum and the inability of the teachers to handle sessions with creativity are the serious issues faced by many schools, colleges and universities. The quality of education can improve only when the students are taught in qualitative pedagogical ways.

Dance in education as a pedagogy is very important and is highly effective ways to connect to students. (Frontiers in Art Research Clausius Scientific Press, Canada DOI: 10.23977/jfar.2021.010107 Volume 1, Number 1, 2021). Dance helps to improve the transfer of knowledge through its creativity and also help students to develop an aesthetic view. This uniqueness can assist the development of synergy and team work can be enhanced.

Dance for Experiential Learning (EL) in Education

Indian schools have included dance in the curriculum as per the Central Board for Secondary Education norms (2017-18). Schools in Karnataka too have included Dance their curriculum as co-curricular education (2020). The time given for this activity ranges from 2 to 3 hours a week, although not mandatory. The physical and the cognitive development in children occurs simultaneously and it is necessary to introduce them to the concept of experiential learning through the medium of dance as the learning occurs with ease. The mathematical and language development in a child happens on an equal footing with that of the physical development.

The NCERT Position paper by National Focus Group on Arts, Music , Dance and Theatre points out that the approach currently used by them is to organize the curriculum to present knowledge which is like a total package in the form of textbooks and the learners are assessed totally based on marks rather than the quality of knowledge that is acquired and retained.

Research carried out by Coastas (2015) states that children totally enjoy to move and dance education pedagogies helps to improve the child's creative learning by empowering them (Youth Dance England, 2010). Hanna has carried out broad research to highlight that dance in the syllabus should include non-verbal language for conceptualisation in mind and understanding. The literature that has been reviewed thus suggests that dance should be given utmost priority in education as it is considered as a form of experiential learning.

Physical education in India

To inculcate physical activities and sports among children's, Department of School Education and Literacy in co-ordination with Department of Sports are organizing activities under "Fit India Movement-Fit India School" where in students are encouraged to be part of physical activities.

All Students from I to XII standard need to participate in Health and Physical education for at least 1 period a day. They are also been mandated that they need to participate in at least two sports activities as per the interest and capabilities, which is one of the eligibility criteria for them to appear for board exams. For the overall development of the students, Sports, Physical activities, Yoga, Co-curricular activities etc are introduced in all states and UTs including NCT of Delhi.

As per the National Curriculum even if dance were separated from Physical Exercise its position as an arts subject along with other physical forms like visual art, drama, and music, its standing may remain unchanged. In present education, conventional academic subjects are used to judge the intelligence of a student with verbal and reasoning and mathematical reasoning along with scientific reasoning. Whereas in comparison the dance movements also seem to be more learned and recollected by the children easily as a language. But dance adds more to the sense of enjoyment. Dance and movement are exhaustively appreciated by children. Costas(2015) found that 38.2% of the 236 children of the age 6 who were primarily interviewed said "loved it".

Evaluation System

The success of DMT depends on the creation and execution of a multi – element evaluation system which is innovative, strong, measurable and realistic. Scientific and feasible assessment methods should be chalked out by the teachers. It also needs to imbibe a diversified and new ways of assessment along with the conventional methods and models of evaluation system. The examination system should focus more on the learning

experience, transfer of knowledge the student has acquired and also any innovative methods, personality issues the student has experienced along with the learning of a specified skill set.

Methodology

The conventional prospect states that rhythmic body movement (dance) plays an important part in enhancing learning/education (Smith-Autard, 2002). This research article analyses the literature unleashing the benefits of creative dance that will enable children to learn in more depth. The keywords / terminologies that were used in this research included “Creative”, “Body-based”, “Nonverbal methods of expression”, “Beyond specificities of language”, “aesthetic dance”, “experiential learning and dance”. Google Scholar, Infotlib were thoroughly searched to understand the application of creative dance to be agreed as an experiential learning. The articles that were selected for research were read and scrutinized by the authors making use of the non-modern content method (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to collect the feeling of whole (Tesch, 1990) and categorised into the consecutive characteristic features : demography, background of the study, objectives, sample, methodology, inferences and results. Articles (N=98) were put together (Mayring, 2000). There were some research articles (N = 09) that needed to be abandoned because of the insignificant population, genre of dance form and other not so relevant features. The analysis showed that dance education in curriculum has been underrated because of evaluation of creative ways of using dance. There is a need for more evidence to exhibit the potential and stature of creative dance (Theocharidou et al., 2018). Nonetheless, some interesting points were found out : socio emotional, arts based, cognitive learning, practical, learning, aesthetic dance , transferable and experiential learning. These observations are explained in detail along with their references in the later part of this article.

Creative Dance and Experiential Learning (EL)

Delving into the aspects of creative dance and how it can be conceptualised as a pedagogical tool coupled with a deep emphasis on experiential learning is very important before it can be experimented in the primary schools in India. This is in contrast to the already established examination requirements. Proposed uses may help in the creation of a new vocabulary which coherent the gravity of creative dance playing a foundation role in the curriculum.

The definition of Experiential Learning is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). Learners frame profound understanding and mastery by exposing themselves to the different of experiential learning sequence : active research, reflective surveillance, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb et al., 2002). **Contemplation comprises of individual experience, feelings, reasoning fundamentals, sentiments, meanings, and understanding experimental learning from viewpoints (Fook & Gardner, 2007) – the creative dance form are were all of the above are seen.**

Human potential movement shows the presence of EL. Creative dance is a self – eloquent and radical. Its a abstract nature, where in affect and sentiment aids to the learning by implementing it because of the results are visible in action. Kolb’s (1984) study indicated sensation, perception, and cognition play a significant part which can be visible in movement of One’s own body as to how one partakes in the world.

There have been several criticisms that were seen for Kolb’s theory (1984). Rogers (1996) and Forrest (2004) grappled that the stages of learning are very simplistic and chances are very high that it can occur simultaneously. Jarvis (1987) and Tennant (1997) contended that the theory was nit substantial because it did not take into consideration the global cultural differences and the emphasis was majorly only on Western concept.

The learner is engaged through dance in the journey of transformation, moving creatively, reflecting & evaluating in order to form new shared meanings (Vygotsy, 1986). Involving in intense experimentation with creative movements provides space to assess own apt communication and depiction of idea or emotion. Previously held assumptions can be challenged by these tasks. The process of learning can turn out to be self – motivated, critically reflective and sustained independently (Perkins, 2008). “Action closes the learning cycle

and reconnects the processing inside the brain with the world. It generates consequences there that create new experiences that begin the cycle anew” (Zull, 2011, cited in Kolb, 2014, p. 142).

Kolb (1984) tried to include somatic activities by extending his model but the incomplete effort lead to many large philosophical queries, of these review of a some related literature looks to add value on how creative dance activities might be implicated as a form of EL.

According to Kolb (1984), creation of knowledge arises in one’s self and set of individuals by experiential conversion by interacting with each other and our surrounding (environment) this is the physical senses. By implementing personification in the syllabus with the help of constant strategies, like EL (Kolb & Kolb, 2012), demonstrated activities that can be highlighted without having to compare the bodies of children like in the field of competitive sports.

Experiential learning assimilates a “repertoire of learning instruments” which involves both physical and mental (Claxton, 2015). Experience here is seen as something that is comprehensive, arbitrated by within oneself and physical frameworks, discussed in “grounded cognition theory” (Barsalou, 2008). Recollection is assisted by limited / complete repetition of knowledge gained with compatible cues from memory (visual, tactile, kinaesthetic)

In learning that is art-based, meaning is derived with the development of cooperation between article /action and the human synergy : an involvement of “embodied selves in the moment” (page.34) evolution from “experiential learning to aesthetic knowing” (p.25). Knowledge that is created in dance which is also seen as an experiential learning, can be created in circumstantial conditions consisting of behaviour, imagination, fantasy, emotion and interactive practises as a connect in between the mind, the body and the brain. The body “communicates social practices and cultural meanings through voice, gesture, and movement” (Cancienne&Snowbar, 2003, p. 244) and physical movement (dance), like a summarized communication of one’s own physical body, gives substitutes exhibiting the relationship among context, reasoning and communicating knowledge.

The emphasis of Experiential Learning is on the primary aspects of cognitive and emotional views (Davis, 2011). The body that is moving is able to communicate ideas (Bassetti, 2014). When experiential learning is adopted in creative dance, the absorption of the entire being in the activity of dance, contemplation and interpretation of the activity is observed. Thereby, an active experimentation can be witnessed.

The key elements of understanding and communication is the learning of movement expression and language (Hanna, 2008; Krish 2010). An integrated model for learning (Paterson et al., 2015) draw a connection between movement studies and experiential learning.

Dance and Socio emotional learning

It’s a positive aspect that schools of today is interested in the progress among children with respect to skills that comprise of social, emotional and communication. Goleman stated that development of cognitive skills is very important in children and side-lining emotional proficiencies, empathy or flexibility “drawn from other areas of the brain” (Goleman, 1995, p. 244). When it comes to handling complex life situations, Socio emotional skills comes to the rescue. Inclusion of creative dance in the curriculum as a pedagogy will aim to inculcate in children a sense of identity, creativity, self confidence, self awareness, handling self and relationships better and also enhanced decision making abilities along with empathy and mental health (Biddle & Asare, 2011), mental health is now an important challenge across schools (Quinn et al., 2007).

Dance as arts – based learning

Structuring the movements into a creative experience in which such vivid movements gets on to conscious awareness for the sake of one’s own self is an uncommon learning event. Creative dance promotes confidence in youngsters (Children’s) (Theodorakou and Zervas (2003). Creative dance enhances innovation of new ideas (Esquivel & Hodes, 2003). Creativity is just not only a mental process. It is ingrained with the help of synergy in

a positive environment (Sawyer, 2000). Expression oriented movement not only increases self-awareness along with it also brings about innovative ideas and thoughts (Kahneman, 2011). The creative dance can hence be used as a major contributing factor for experiential learning. Outcomes like action, communication, cogitation and reflection can be met with creativity.

Dance and Transferable Learning

Dance has improvement in the learning ability of a individual, many research have exposed this (Keinänen et al., 2000). Research on dance impacting understanding (Barr & Lewin, 1994; Blakemore, 2003; Giguere, 2011; Todd, 1979), critical thinking (Weiyun, 2001), and behaviour in school learning room (Sherborne, 1974; Strong et al., 2005) have highlighted crucial points. Strong et al. (2005) proved that physical activity showed a progressive influence on recollection ability and attentiveness. Accelerated broader educational attainment can be through dance was pointed out by Pickard and Maude (2014), also Lucas et al. (2013) pointed that creativity increases achievement results (Watkins, 2010). Adams (2016) highlighted that dance can establish curricular learning in kids, keeping the feat in mind that meaningful learning engagement happens through “semiotic activities” (Adams, 2016, p.32), which includes innovation, challenging knowledge and approaches using their body as instruments. For instance, dance helps to envision a situation, create and support a format, and supports text deconstruction. Thus it aims at transferability of learning giving way for an experiential learning to occur in children.

Conclusion

(Swetha & Rajiv 2021) explain that Creative dance as a pedagogy can be adopted and further customised according to the curriculum for meeting the educational requirements. It's a welcome sign if teachers can be trained on this creative dance and movement (Cheung, 2010). It is very essential for the teachers to have a holistic view of the children's abilities before they embark on this journey. The literature has shown sufficiently that creative dance adds to the overall experience of learning in children, when it is chalked out as an experiential learning. It is needed to be brought to the mainstream of schooling. Innovative ways of teaching will only compliment the learning. Education should be a holistic approach and its necessary that the child's cognitive, creative, physical, emotional, artistic feelings are taken into consideration for the overall development of children.

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