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Research Methodology For Education Through Partner Dancesport

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Abstract

The application of dance, as a branch of art and social practice within the education sphere has received limited attention by research specialists in the field of educology and psychology. DanceSport as a modern cultural phenomenon is one of the most popular ways to educate a person. A new area of research opens up when choosing education through dance art as a research object. The scientific problem is the lack of evidence-based methodology available to investigate the education of students through partner DanceSport. Further, it is unclear how to reduce a contraposition between dance, as a result of sport performance, and art when traditionally only the methodology of dance technique training is used within Lithuania. The aim of the article is to create a methodology for the education of students through partner DanceSport when preparing them for high-performance competition.

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1. Introduction

The article reveals a relevant topic of students' education in terms of both general and artistic competencies. Art education may have an influence on the emotional and moral experience of values and how they are internalized (Girdzijauskas, 2004). However, students' artistic capacities, which have an essential impact on the formation of their cultural experience, are not assessed during the candidacy evaluation processes of higher education institutions (Girdzijauskas, 2012). On appearance of regulatory documents (The Order of Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania *On approval of the concept of humanistic culture training through artistic activity*, 2012),

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it is highlighted that the teaching process should focus not only on knowledge but on artistic competencies as well. The application of dance in education is one of the branches of art and social practice that started in practical activity, and thus it is recognized as a field of educology and psychology that has been little researched (Nikitin, 2003). Dance is an ability, which is rather forlorn in the official educational system (Karoblis, 2003). Artistic training is a perfect environment for student's personal development and self-realization. The concept of education through dance was defined by Read (1996) who noted that "art allows the children to 'leave themselves'", meaning it enables them to open up for contact with the world. With the help of dance, a student has the possibility to develop his/her form of expression and acquire the basics of cultural competence needed for creative participation in the life of a community. DanceSport, as a modern cultural phenomenon, is one of the most popular ways to educate a person (Prūsaitis, 2010). A new area of research has been born by utilizing education through partner DanceSport as a research object. *The topic* has been little researched in Lithuania. Historical and conceptual problems of DanceSport (ballroom dance) have been analysed (Karoblis, 2003, Idzelevičius, 2010; Soraka, 1999, 2007) and some scientific research has been conducted in Lithuania (Banevičiūtė, 2009). For example, Banevičiūtė (2009) prepared and defended one of the earliest dissertations in the field of social and educational sciences, which analysed the peculiarities of the development of dance skills in early adolescence. Early adolescence is considered by scientists, art educologists and psychologists as a critical turning point in artistic training. The structure of dance skills related to the expression of dance elements (movement, space, rhythm, tempo, force of movement, dynamics, metaphor) is substantiated by the cognitive theory of art education (Reference). Moreover, the communicational trend of dance skills training, the kinaesthetic aspect of dance skills and the peculiarities of adolescent dance activity are analysed within the article. The empirical part of the work describes the research methodology and the selection of research methods. Following a questionnaire survey of dance teachers, the author identified the main tendencies in the education of dance. The data of diagnostic investigation revealed the possibilities to develop dance skills that were discerned theoretically and their peculiarities. Pedagogical experimentation allowed Banevičiūtė (2009) to determine the effectiveness of the created dance skills development model when developing dance skills in early adolescence.

1.1 The scientific problem

There is a lack of evidence-based educational research methodologies for education through partner DanceSport. It is not yet clear how to reduce the conflict between dance, as a result of sport performance, and art with traditionally used educational methodologies of dance technique. Dance teachers/coaches do not focus enough attention on the fact that dance, as a combination of art and sport, does not only create an aesthetic view but is also a powerful means of psychological/social transformation and expression of new cultural ideas (Dyck, Archetti, 2003). In the system of professional sport, DanceSport partners are trained using various educational methodologies by foreign and Lithuanian authors based on different approaches to dance education (Idzelevičienė, 1998, Idzelevičius, 2000; 2010; Kavaliauskas, 2001; Soraka, 1999; 2007; Šlepniov, 2007). The prevailing critical approach to dance training, which usually focuses on the negative, weak aspects of dance training and dance mastering, critical assessment of dance elements, moves or body placement, evaluation of musical and artistic expression both during workout and competition, comparing oneself with other competing couples that aim for high dance performance, creates turmoil. This in turn enhances negative feedback, resulting in increased opposition of dancers and decreased motivation, which makes it challenging to encourage dance partners to strive for high performance results. Thus this form of criticism often decreases the motivation of dancers and their parents, increases their negative emotions, reinforces the conflict between dance, as a high performance result, and art, disturbs creative cooperation among teachers, dancers and their parents in the competitive context of Lithuanian DanceSport. **The aim of the article** is to create a research methodology for education through partner DanceSport and training for high performance competition that would help to determine the peculiarities of education through art of dance and factors that influence it. The **research hypothesis** is as follows: The development of students' artistic competence through partner DanceSport is conditioned by the unity of kinaesthetic, cognitive and emotional processes. For example, the systematic development of partner dance skills, the accumulation of personal experience, the combination of emotional and moral values development, and finally the development of the student-teacher relationship.

1.2 Research methods and methodology

Through the creation of a research methodology, several theoretical assumptions about the development of students' artistic competencies through DanceSport are explored, including, the *dualistic-symbolic* and *dance as body training* concepts. In addition, the theoretical constituents of education through dance art are defined and include: 1) *social-multicultural*; 2) *educational-communicative*; 3) *artistic-aesthetic*; and 4) *dance culture in postmodern approach*.

✓ *Theoretical assumptions about the development of students' artistic competencies through dance sport*

1.2.1 *Dualistic-symbolic conception of dance and dance as body training.*

The conception of dance is explained differently in the changing context of society, in terms of time, place and culture (Helen, 1995). In the works of Gardner (1995), it is revealed and explicated as a concept of a symbolic system that integrates body and mind where, during dance, the dancer can express him/herself through movement because of his/her emotional (social) intelligence¹ (Mantell-Seidel, Arts, 2007). The essence of the dualistic conception of dance is related to the Cartesian issues of body and mind dualism. The theme of duality is repeated in fundamental theories that analyse reality and its representation; culture and nature dualism, association of body and mind with language and movement duality. A wider concept, a symbolic one, considers dance as "life metaphor". Movement and other activities of certain insects, for example ants and bees, resemble dancing. Male birds assume glossy colours and dance during the tread period. The male peacock displays his tail feathers and walks straight to attract the female peacock. Antelopes often dance during mating, and the moose rhythmically leap around the female they want to attract. Dance is a composite part of life itself and its natural expression.

1.2.2 *Dance as body training, sport, leisure and social performance activity.*

In this view, dance is understood as an active performance in any social environment and culture. Dance is not merely an activity observed by people but also an active performance prevailing both in popular culture and in subcultures (Helen, 1995). For example, the modern time is characterized by appreciation of the beautiful human body and dancing (from jazz dance to ballroom/dance sport or ballet). Dance is used as a means to maintain a fit body that corresponds to certain ethical and health evaluations. Composition of various styles of dance and various dance movements are included into adult "aerobics" or "step" programmes to train the body in sport centres and health clubs almost every day throughout the year (Helen, 1995). Dance has become a sporting activity. The situation is similar with children, as families who can afford dance lessons take their children to lessons from early age. Yet in every country there are people who decide to take their children to DanceSport lessons so that they acquire the dance skills, style and techniques to prepare for competitions and to participate in them (Helen, 1995). The perception of dance as a performance (social expression of dance) is traditionally attractive to society, as it serves as a means to express social activeness. Forms of social dance, as well as forms of other performance dance, are realized through various aesthetic dance moves and bodily expressions. This is a type of physical activity in which people can get involved at various periods of their lives individually, in couples or in groups. Social dancing also takes place at leisure time in different environments: people dance in streets, disco halls, various parties or banquets, weddings, social church communities (Helen, 1995).

¹Emotional (social) intelligence is measured by the coefficient of emotional intelligence and defined as a skill, competence and abilities (usually, a set of traits), ability to perceive personal, other people's and group emotions (Wikipedia, 2009).

✓ ***Theoretical constituents of education through dance art***

1.2.3 Social-multicultural constituent of dance.

This conception is related to the idea that dance as an aspect of human behaviour essentially performs important social and cultural functions in all cultures (Mantell-Seidel, Arts, 2007). Historically, dance movements formed in various cultures and were a natural form for human beings to express their inner world, feelings and emotions (Hazel, 2006). The concepts and models of language, religion, history, differences and similarities and other cultural phenomena are encoded into dancing. Dance can stimulate social solidarity or order in everyday life and it may also help to maintain individual cultural identities, in order to resist the pressure of assimilation-merging tendencies that level the differences (Mantell-Seidel, Arts, 2007). It is possible to state the emerging paradoxical situation: when educating students in personal expression and often partner DanceSport training, their specific features are levelled as the main focus is on body.

1.2.4 Educational-communicative constituent of dance.

This conception is well revealed when rephrasing H'Doubler's (1998) statement that teaching should be aimed at using people's skills and abilities, for example, their involvement in learning to communicate when striving for life of well-accorded and balanced individuals (Hazel, 2006). When searching for the way to explain the educational-communicative constituent of dance, we go back to early civilizations where the historical roots of dance as art and teaching were formed. People danced even in the Stone Age. Cave drawings and other traces of historical evidence that people danced as far as 10,000 years BC (Idzelevičius, 2010). The early civilization already knew the effect of dance as art, and teaching to dance was purposeful (Hasel, 2006). Historical analysis of dance education shows that dance and movement was a form of communication among individuals which satisfied their need to communicate. Dance and movement were used to satisfy the need for art and aesthetical beauty, as well as to treat illnesses using rhythm. Nobody questioned why dance is needed. Body movement, gestures, eye contact, leg moves, and body swaying were used as expressions of emotional and social behaviour, everyday life, religious ceremonies, and religious beliefs. Some dance and movement researchers have analysed the historical aspects of dance and movement in order to reveal or imitate everyday life better (Hasel, 2006). The power of the human body has been given prominence in many educational and cultural theories and discussions. For example, the power of body emerges in movement theories by Rudolph Laban (1971), which have influenced the methods of education through dance worldwide (Candacee, 2002). Laban used differentiation and systematization and distinguished four elements of dance movement time; space; effort (weight); and direction (flow) (Candacee, 2002). *Time*: Each dance is a reality defined by time during which dance is performed at its internal rhythm. *Space*: Any dance is movement in a certain defined space; therefore, it is possible to observe and analyse movement trajectories in the dance space and how, at what level the space is used. *Weight*: During dance, movement may be performed differently, i.e. lightly, lively or heavily (with tension). *Direction (flow)*: Under the influence of the first three factors, dance continues in a certain dance direction (flow). In terms of education, the quality of dance performance is important. Dance or dance movement according to the quality of its performance may be considered either light or constrained, tight, and tense. The components of dance dynamics according to Laban (1971), which should be developed simultaneously, are as follows: 1) the usage of body parts when performing a dance according to specific requirements; 2) the effort used in body movement when performing a move or several moves; 3) the ability of a body to use time, space and weight in the flow of the dance performed; and 4) the shapes of movement (i.e. the ways the body interacts with the environment, the levels of dance direction and movement in space).

1.3 Artistic-aesthetic constituent of dance.

The essential conception of dance is related to art. Each country has a minority in the society that represents art. Thus, we assume that the notion of dance as art is relevant only to the few. The idea of the arts as being the tradition of "higher culture" (i.e. ballet) has been passed on from generation to generation. Despite that, some classical or traditional dance forms "convert" into popular (mass) culture and vice versa (Helen, 1995). For example, contemporary or modern dance, the formal principles of which are less known to people at large, is less sponsored and tries to "get rid of" its avant-garde status and find its way from a traditional street stage to the stage of

commercial theatre. Consequently, new postmodern dance trends encompassing new dance forms and content are formed on the boundary between traditional (higher) and popular (mass) cultures (Helen, 1995). One of the latest styles of DanceSport involves both conventional and postmodern spaces and styles. The question then arises, how do we analyse education through dance sport? It is difficult to imagine that dance as a branch of art may be explained and investigated as a rational, consistent and stable subject while applying formal criteria. According to Valantiejus (2004), the idealistic and clear objective of dance as art is altered by the concepts of reflective self-consciousness (of a social agent). Clarity and definiteness on the one hand and indefiniteness on the other are two extremes, which are typical of positivistic and postmodern concepts that are contradictory in their own way. Clarity is pursued in a rather unproblematic way (for example, through applying empirical measurement criteria), while the understanding of indefiniteness criteria encourages combining different ways of cognition which are less narrow and one-sided than empirical criteria. Indefiniteness does not mean that objective criteria are rejected, however, the focus is on evaluation of factors of openness, dynamism, coincidence, diversity, duality, the deconstruction of meanings and dialectic discrepancy (Valantiejus, 2004:448).

1.4 Aesthetics

– according to its definition – should encourage the usage of various, pluralistic and flexible assessment criteria. Nevertheless, both historically and theoretically, aesthetic sophistication is far from being typical of the self-consciousness of Lithuanian society (whereby “society” is not considered to be a metaphysical reality but rather a product of the prevailing norms, principles, customs and attitudes). Each “postmodern” neologism is associated to the field of ethic decisions and moral assessments (Valantiejus, 2004:454). Consequently, students’ education through art of dance cannot be associated only with body training, while completely ignoring the moral values aspect.

1.5 Constituent of dance culture in post-modern approach.

The importance of culture in modern life depends on two main reasons that complement each other. First, culture has become the most dynamic component of civilization; it asserts itself in the field of art as impulsive energy consciously striving to change future forms and sensations. Second, the mentioned cultural impulse has been legitimized whereby society recognizes the critical role of imagination. Previously, culture was seen as a factor that determines norms and establishes moral and philosophical traditions, according to which everything that is new is assessed and (most often) criticized. According to some theories, society does not accept novelties passively but rather devours them hungrily, as it believes that a novelty has more value than any old form (Valantiejus, 2004:449). In our opinion, societal observation, in the historical dispersion of education through dance art, notices new dance structures that appeared with resistance and that reveal the contradictions and critical impulses of the time. For instance, waltz depolarizes partners of different sex in a couple, . Alternatively, street dances reduces artistic discharges on the stages of luxurious theatres and dance halls through admitting lower, marginalized layers of society into the conversion of dance culture, and later transferring the aspects of their cultural aspects into the stages of high society. According to Giddens, the avant-garde and self-reflective societal culture that emphasises the dualistic nature of modern changes is apparent. The search for a new world-view echoes the reformation of social reality into the existing reality, and thus has a direct impact on the changing societal vision. Social and societal changes are becoming very much dependent on each other. While the riskiness of some spheres of social reality is reducing, unknown risk factors are flaring up. The world is changing rampantly and is thus having a greater impact on previous forms of social practices (Giddens, 2000, cited in Valantiejus, 2004:450). In order to avoid the fetishist approach to meaning, concrete and abstract meaning, certain social activity with its conditions and consequences are important. It is aspired to understand all this from subjective experience, images and goals of a particular person (Valantiejus, 2004:450). An actual human being experiencing a personal drama is lost between different boundaries of constructed meanings: the rigidity and freedom of women and men’s fashion, the fast change of forms which are pointlessly manifested in pleasures of game, emptiness and waste, dandyism, decorativeness and the search for meaning. All this is reflected in dance constituents. Dance reveals the personal drama of an individual as a social reality that is being constructed, where everything that is old merges with what is new, and where everything that is constant converges with what is constantly changing. The sociology of art unfolds the meaning and focuses on the context of creating. Any result of “meaning” is considered to be an epiphenomenon of creative processes, but not an

internal part of artistic creation or communication between the work and the audience (Valantiejus, 2004:452). The following research methods were applied to the chosen methodology: 1) a scientific literature analysis; 2) a standardized anonymous survey; and 3) a statistical analysis. Research data collection involved a research instrument, which evaluated four dimensions: 1) students' temperament; 2) couple's readiness for competition; 3) couple's compatibility; 4) interrelations with teacher (coach). Tests to assess sportdancers' performance (adapted from Meidus, 2004) were used to design the research instrument. The tests are oriented towards self-regulation, the ability to know oneself, the ability to assess and improve the skills of self-development and the management of personal mental processes. Such skills are necessary for every sportsperson, as it is required by a specific nature of professional sport (Meidus, Krupecki, 2006). By applying a systematic methodological approach when preparing sportdancers' of high performance it was noted that significant differences exist between introverts and extraverts, neurotic and stable sportdancers' groups Meidus and Kšištof (2006). Therefore, to evaluate temperament, the test version by Eysenck was used which consists of 57 initial questions and constituting 4 subscales: extraversion, introversion, neuroticism and deception (Eysenck, 1985; Meidus 2004). The psychological readiness of a DanceSport couple for competition was evaluated using a normative rating scale, which was designed to measure the couple's readiness for competition according to 10 attributes (belief in winning, responsibility, emotional stability, etc.). The psychological compatibility of a DanceSport couple was evaluated using three scales (19 attributes in total) revealing subjective opinions about 1) partner; 2) expression of partner's individuality; and 3) expression of partner's team spirit. The questionnaire for evaluation of educational interrelations with a dance teacher (coach) consisted of three scales (competence-based relations, emotional relations, behaviour) and contained 24 attributes (Meidus, 2004).

2. Summary

2.1 Scientific problem

There is a lack of evidence-based educational research methodology dealing with teaching partner danceSport. The aim of the article is to create research methodology for students' education through partner danceSport and their preparation for high performance competition that would help to determine the peculiarities of training students in danceSport and factors that influence the process. **Research hypothesis:** Development of artistic competence in students using partner danceSport is conditioned by the unity of kinaesthetic, cognitive and emotional processes, i.e. systematic development of partner danceSport skills, accumulation of personal experience, combining teaching about emotional and moral values, development of the relationship between students and their teacher. **Methods:** 1) scientific literature analysis; 2) standardized anonymous survey; 3) mathematical statistical analysis. To collect the data for research, a research instrument consisting of four parts was used to evaluate: 1) student temperament; 2) couple's readiness for competition; 3) couple's compatibility; 4) interrelations with teacher (coach). Tests to assess sportdancers' performance (adapted from Meidus, 2004) were used to design the research instrument. To evaluate temperament, the test version by Eysenck, consisting of 57 initial questions and constituting 4 subscales (extraversion, introversion, neuroticism and deception), was used. Psychological readiness of a danceSport couple for competition was evaluated using normed rating scale questionnaires, and the couple's readiness for competition was assessed according to 10 attributes (belief in winning, responsibility, emotional stability, etc.). Psychological compatibility of a danceSport couple was evaluated using three scales (19 attributes in total) revealing opinion about 1) partner; 2) expression of partner's individuality; 3) expression of partner's team spirit. Questionnaire for evaluation of educational interrelations with a dance teacher (coach) consisted of three scales (competence-based relations, emotional relations, behaviour) and contained 24 attributes (Chaninas, Meidus, 2004). **Conclusion.** Theoretically-based research methodology for students' education through partner danceSport was created. The methodology helps to determine the peculiarities of education through dance art and factors that influence the process and seeks to reduce contraposition between dance, as a result of sport performance, and art.

3. Conclusion

A research methodology for students' education through partner DanceSport, which helps to determine the peculiarities of education through dance art, the factors that influence the process, and minimize the contraposition between dance, as the result of sport performance, and art was created and theoretically grounded.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR EDUCATION THROUGH PARTNER DANCESPORT

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