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The Value and Approaches to Enhancing Dance Performance and Teaching Skills in Preschool Education Major Students

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Abstract: Dance education, as a unique form of artistic instruction, is garnering increased attention in the realm of preschool education. For students majoring in early childhood education, mastering dance teaching methodologies not only diversifies their pedagogical tools, boosting their employability, but also invigorates the curriculum. Especially through the study and practice of classical, folk, and modern dance, their educational proficiency is significantly enhanced. Dance education has profound implications for preschool education, presenting both children and educators with novel opportunities and challenges.

Keywords: Preschool education major; Dance performance; Teaching skills

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Introduction

With societal advancements and deepening understandings of education, an increasing number of people recognize the significant role dance education plays in preschool education. For preschool children, dance not only enhances their physical coordination and balance, fostering their sense of rhythm and musicality, but also strengthens their emotional expression and social skills. Cultivating these abilities undeniably benefits their future development. For students in the preschool education major, dance education represents more than just curricular content—it embodies a comprehensive teaching approach and tool. Through dance education, these students can gain a holistic understanding of children’s physical and emotional developmental characteristics, enabling them to better serve children’s needs. Furthermore, dance education offers these students expanded career opportunities. In a competitive job market, those with a background in dance education undeniably hold a competitive edge. These individuals can find opportunities not only in traditional preschool education settings but can also leverage their specialized skills across broader domains.

1. The Value of Dance Education

1.1 Positive Impacts of Dance Education on the Physical and Mental Development of Preschool Children

Dance enhances the physical coordination and balance of preschool children. Every movement and step in dance requires children to engage muscles throughout their bodies. In this process, various body parts are exercised, thereby improving overall coordination. Additionally, challenging movements in dance, such as jumps and rolls, necessitate a strong sense of balance. As dance training progresses, children’s coordination and balance will significantly improve. ^[1]

Dance plays a crucial role in cultivating a sense of rhythm and musicality among preschool children. Dance is intimately linked with music; dance without music lacks soul. In dance, children adjust their movements according to the rhythm of the music to achieve harmony. This demands a strong musical perception from the child. For instance, a lively melody calls for energetic and joyful dance moves, while a slower tune requires soft and graceful actions. Continuous dance training considerably enhances a child’s musicality and rhythm perception.

Dance also serves an irreplaceable function in nurturing preschool children's emotional expression and social skills. As a medium of emotional expression, children can convey their feelings through dance, be it joy, sorrow, or anger. For example, when children hear a cheerful song, they may spontaneously dance, channeling their happiness. Conversely, when facing disappointments, they might use dance as a therapeutic outlet, finding inner peace. Moreover, dance is a social activity, providing children with opportunities to interact with peers, fostering collaboration, and bolstering their social skills.

1.2 Dance in Modern Society: A Fresh Perspective in Education

In today's world, diversified educational methods are gaining widespread attention and admiration. Dance education, as a unique form among these, is increasingly appreciated and adopted by students majoring in preschool education. This isn't just due to the artistic and engaging nature of dance; it also opens up unprecedented opportunities for these students' professional development. Often confronted with the challenge of how best to educate and nurture children, these students may find traditional methods, despite their time-tested validity, to be monotonous and uninspiring in certain contexts. The incorporation of dance education offers a fresh perspective and tool for these future educators.^[2] Through dance, they can foster children's physical coordination, rhythmic sense, and emotional expression, making the learning process more vibrant and enjoyable.

The current job market is increasingly competitive. For students in preschool education, standing out amidst a sea of job applicants and showcasing their unique strengths becomes paramount. Those with a background and experience in dance education undeniably have a competitive edge. They can find opportunities not only in conventional preschool education sectors but also excel in fields such as dance and arts education. This broadens their employment opportunities and choices. Dance education also enriches the instructional content and methods available to them. While traditional subjects like mathematics, language, and science remain crucial, they may not resonate with every child. Introducing dance education diversifies and enhances the curriculum. Students can merge dance with other subjects, leading to innovative and engaging instructional content. Furthermore, dance education offers a novel approach to teaching, allowing educators to spark children's interest in learning, making the educational journey more relaxed and delightful.^[3]

2. Approaches to Enhancing Dance Performance Skills among Preschool Education Majors

2.1 Training in Fundamental Dance Techniques

Dance, an ancient art form, necessitates the acquisition of a series of foundational skills that lay the groundwork for advanced performances. For students specializing in preschool education, this foundational training serves as their introduction to the world of dance. Central to this training is the development of bodily flexibility and the mastery of basic movements. Many actions in dance, such as high leg raises, kicks, and spins, require significant flexibility. But flexibility alone isn't enough; students must also learn the correct techniques and methods for executing these movements. As such, their foundational training heavily emphasizes extensive stretching and relaxation exercises to enhance body pliancy. Moreover, they are introduced to a plethora of basic dance movements, including steps, turns, and jumps. These movements form the cornerstone of dance and are vital for subsequent learning and progression. Rhythmic and musical awareness also play a pivotal role in foundational dance training. Dance is intrinsically tied to music, and a dance devoid of musical accompaniment lacks soul. In this phase, students must learn to adjust their movements in harmony with musical rhythms. Techniques such as tapping, clapping, and jumping are employed to cultivate a sense of rhythm. Additionally, students must learn to interact with music, ensuring their dance complements the musical piece. An integral component of foundational training also involves teaching students to relax and express their emotions freely.^[4] Dance serves as a conduit for emotional expression, and only when students let go and open their hearts can they truly experience the allure of dance and portray it flawlessly. Mastery of these foundational skills is a rite of passage for preschool education majors venturing into dance. Armed with these skills, they are poised to soar freely in the dance realm, showcasing their unique flair and elegance.

2.2 Learning and Practicing Diverse Dance Styles

The realm of dance is vast and profound, seamlessly integrating a myriad of cultures, traditions, and styles. For preschool education majors, gaining proficiency in multiple dance genres not only enhances their dance repertoire but also broadens their artistic horizons. Classical dance stands as an epitome in this field, boasting a rich history and deep-rooted traditions. Characterized by its graceful and fluid movements, every gesture and gaze in classical dance speaks volumes. When preschool education majors immerse themselves in this style, they not only refine their postures and techniques but also delve deep into the cultural and historical narratives underpinning classical dance. Such knowledge becomes invaluable when integrating dance with other subjects, paving the way for

interdisciplinary curricular innovations in their future educational endeavors.

Folk dance, on the other hand, is the dance of the people. Originating from daily life, it mirrors societal nuances and emotional landscapes. Each ethnicity and region boasts its own distinct folk dance. As students of preschool education delve into folk dances, they encounter diverse cultural customs and experience the raw authenticity inherent in these dances. This exposure proves beneficial, fostering positive educational relationships with children and parents from varied backgrounds in their subsequent professional pursuits.

Contemporary dance, being a progressive iteration, shatters traditional confines, promoting freedom and openness. Known for its dynamic, inventive movements, it offers a canvas for students to express their individuality and emotions. Engaging with contemporary dance, these students unleash their imaginations and creativity, exploring the endless possibilities dance offers. Such engagement is pivotal in their future roles as educators, where they'll champion creative activities and cultivate innovative thinking in children.

Be it classical, folk, or contemporary dance, as preschool education majors navigate the learning and practicing journey, they continuously elevate their dance skills and artistic acumen. This not only opens up myriad opportunities for their career progression but also ensures their teaching methodologies remain vibrant and engaging.

3. Conclusion

For students majoring in preschool education, dance education unveils an entirely new realm. It not only equips them with diverse teaching methodologies and tools but also bolsters their competitiveness in the job market. Significantly, dance education diversifies and enriches their instructional content and strategies. Whether it's classical, folk, or contemporary dance, each style offers invaluable learning and practical experience. These experiences will become treasured assets in their professional journeys, allowing them to carve a unique niche in the educational sector. Dance education rejuvenates preschool education, making it more vibrant and meaningful.

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