

A Study on the Practical Application of Creative Integration Teaching Methods in Dance Courses at Teacher Training Colleges—Taking the Dance Studies Programme at Hunan Normal University as a Case Study

Mengyuan Zhu

School of Music, Hunan Normal University, Changsha, Hunan, 410081, China

Abstract: *Against the backdrop of high-quality development in arts education for teacher training in the new era, traditional dance teaching in higher normal institutions has tended to emphasize professional skills training, with classroom formats becoming increasingly closed and rigid. There is a marked disconnect between the professional training system and the practical needs of arts education at the grassroots level, making it difficult to cultivate versatile teacher-trainee talent who possess both professional competence and the ability to deliver arts education services. The Creative Integration Teaching Method is grounded in the educational characteristics of dance training at teacher-training colleges. It breaks down the boundaries between specialist classrooms and the social context of aesthetic education, taking professional dance as its core whilst incorporating the everyday, life-oriented features of popular dance, thereby driving a structural disorganization of the curriculum. Taking the reform of dance education for teacher training as its central theme, this paper draws upon the intrinsic logic of the complementary and symbiotic relationship between university dance and community dance, and, based on school-based classroom practice and experience in providing aesthetic education services at the grassroots level, this paper examines the current practical challenges facing dance classrooms in higher normal institutions, elucidates the practical value and guiding principles of the Creative Integration Teaching Model, and explores implementation pathways tailored to higher normal institutions across four dimensions: curriculum content reconstruction, classroom model transformation, school-community collaborative education, and the establishment of long-term mechanisms. It aims to provide practical guidance for the reform of dance aesthetic education and the cultivation of versatile teacher-training talent in the new era.*

Keywords: Dance in teacher training colleges; Creative integration teaching method; Teaching reform; Aesthetic education practice.

1. An Analysis of the Core Definitions and Curriculum Adaptation Characteristics of Professional Dance and Social Dance in Teacher Training Institutions

In the new era, dance education in teacher training institutions fulfils the dual functions of preserving professional artistic heritage and serving public aesthetic education. Professional dance taught in

teacher training institutions and popular dance practised in social settings both form part of the national aesthetic education system; whilst they are highly consistent in terms of their core aesthetic principles and educational objectives, they differ significantly in training paradigms, aesthetic orientations, target audiences and pedagogical logic. These differences and complementary aspects provide both theoretical and practical grounds for the introduction of creative integrated teaching methods into higher normal college classrooms.

1.1 Core Characteristics and Pedagogical Features of Professional Dance Courses in Higher Normal Colleges

Relying on the systematic educational framework of teacher-training institutions, dance courses in higher normal colleges are character by distinct professionalism, systematic, bastardization and aesthetic leadership. Through long-term pedagogical research, the curriculum has evolved into a mature, closed-loop structure encompassing multiple teaching modules, including fundamental physical training, the study of traditional and modern/contemporary repertoire, the appreciation of dance history and theory, and choreography and creative composition. Physical training strictly adheres to standard body mechanics, rhythm and the logic of force application, emphasis the refined expression of body language and the complete presentation of artistic meaning.

The school-based educational system follows a tiered development approach, progressively building a comprehensive educational pathway—from consolidating foundational skills to staging productions, and from accumulating theoretical knowledge to engaging in research and practical exploration. Classroom teaching adheres to a rigorous aesthetic paradigm, delving deeply into the core of traditional dance culture whilst incorporating contemporary artistic concepts. With stage performances and professional competitions serving as the primary outlets, the programme focuses on cultivating professional aesthetic sensibilities and nurturing high-calibre artistic talent. The overall teaching approach is character by a high degree of refinement, professionalism and academic rigour, and possesses strong aesthetic leadership value; however, the teaching environment remains relatively insular and lacks sufficient adaptability to the context of public arts education.

1.2 The Core Characteristics of Social Dance and Suitable Teaching Approaches

Social dance is rooted in the everyday cultural life of the general public. With the primary aim of promoting aesthetic education for all and cultivating both mind and body, it is character by a distinct focus on self-expression, widespread accessibility, relevance to daily life and flexibility. Participants span a wide range of ages and skill levels; the barrier to entry is low, with no strict requirements regarding professional background or training facilities. Activities extend to everyday settings such as community spaces, village halls and public squares.

Dance content is largely drawn from aspects of folk life, regional folk customs and popular aesthetic preferences. Choreography is simple and accessible, with a light, lively and flowing rhythm, aligning with the general public's physical movement habits and aesthetic sensibilities. The overall teaching atmosphere is relaxed and inclusive, emphasis the group participation experience and physical and mental relaxation. This approach enables the widespread engagement of the general public in aesthetic education, effectively addressing the limitations of the insular nature of professional dance circles. However, spontaneous dance practices among the general public generally lack systematic professional guidance; there are numerous irregularities in the use of physical energy and choreographic logic, and the aesthetic standards and artistic depth require professional intervention to be enhanced.

1.3 The Intrinsic Connection Between the Two and the Mechanism of Complementary at the Curricular Level

There exists a profound, symbiotic connection between professional dance training at teacher training colleges and social dance in the context of aesthetic education. Professional dance classes can provide standard training models, systematic choreographic thinking and a rich cultural foundation for public aesthetic education, thereby addressing the issues of arbitrariness, homogenization and superficiality found in social dance instruction. Conversely, the rich grassroots practical contexts, diverse aesthetic demands of the general public and vibrant creative material drawn from everyday life inherent in social dance nourish teaching in higher normal institutions, breaking the stagnation of professional teaching that is often isolated from real-world contexts, and providing vivid practical references for innovation in classroom choreography and the imitation of teaching models.

The two forms of dance are highly complementary in terms of their educational strengths and developmental shortcomings: the bastardization, academic rigour and aesthetic sophistication of professional dance can guide the quality enhancement and upgrading of social dance; whilst the universality, everyday relevance and practicality of social dance can drive higher teacher training institutions' dance education to break out of its insular circles and connect more closely with people's daily lives. This complementary relationship lays a natural and suitable foundation for the implementation of creative integration teaching methods in higher teacher training classrooms.

2. The Value, Advantages, and Practical Constraints of Integrating Creative Convergence Teaching Methods into Teacher Education Classrooms

Based on the goal of cultivating well-rounded aesthetic education professionals at teacher training institutions, introducing creative convergence teaching approaches into regular dance classes can effectively bridge the gap between specialized instruction and social aesthetic education. However, in the process of implementation, practical challenges remain, such as the dilution of professional aesthetic standards, a mismatch between teaching supply and student demand, and insufficient adaptation to classroom settings.

2.1 The Educational Value of Integrating Creative Convergence Teaching into Classrooms

The creative convergence teaching model helps facilitate the dissemination of high-quality aesthetic education resources from universities to grassroots communities. Through tiered classroom instruction and choreography training, it guides teacher candidates to master methods for adapting professional movements to a general audience. This enables them to correct the public's posture and movement during grassroots teaching support and community aesthetic education services, thereby reducing physical injuries caused by improper exercise. At the same time, it enriches the content, form, and cultural significance of public dance, contributing to an overall improvement in the quality of aesthetic education for all citizens.

At the same time, the integrated classroom model transcends the one-dimensional nature of traditional skills instruction by balancing the consolidation of professional foundations with the cultivation of teaching competencies. It guides teacher education students to develop practical skills in tiered instruction, choreography for the general public, and the organization of aesthetic education programs through classroom study, thereby broadening the employment prospects for teacher education majors and better meeting the diverse talent needs of grassroots aesthetic education positions in the new era. Furthermore, practical aesthetic education materials drawn from everyday life can broaden the horizons

of classroom choreography, enabling professional dance creations to combine artistic excellence with the warmth of everyday life, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of dance art in reaching the general public.

2.2 Practical Constraints on the Implementation of Integrated Teaching

The process of advancing integrated teaching carries the potential risk of diluting professional integrity. If there is excessive pandering to popular aesthetics, it can easily lead to the simplification or even stripping away of core professional techniques, rhythms, and cultural connotations, thereby eroding the unique artistic qualities of professional dance. This, in turn, results in a relaxation of classroom teaching standards and a lack of solid foundational training in students' professional competence.

Faculty at teacher-training institutions have long been deeply engaged in specialized classroom instruction, having developed established teaching paradigms. When faced with a general public audience for aesthetic education—which often has no prior foundation and varies widely in skill levels—there is a tendency for discrepancies in the adaptation of teaching language, pace, and logic, making it difficult for students to master the teaching techniques required for public aesthetic education. At the same time, there is a significant disparity between the standardized training environments of professional classrooms and the everyday, community-based settings of grassroots arts education. The lack of scenario-based practical training on campus makes it difficult for students to flexibly adapt to the teaching needs of different venues and audiences when they leave campus to provide arts education services, resulting in a “cultural mismatch” in teaching implementation.

2.3 Principles for Optimizing the Implementation of Creative Integrated Classrooms

To balance the dual objectives of professional training and inclusive arts education, integrated classroom teaching must adhere to scientific implementation guidelines. First, adhere to the baseline of professional integrity by preserving the core body techniques, rhythms, and cultural essence of professional dance. While making appropriate adaptations and adjustments for accessibility, maintain educational standards that uphold artistic aesthetics and professional norms. Second, adopt an approach of adapting to local conditions and tailoring instruction to different levels. Based on the spatial characteristics of various arts education settings and the physical and mental foundations of different audiences, differentiate teaching content and methods to achieve a precise alignment between professional resources and public needs. Finally, we must adhere to a long-term approach of two-way collaboration between schools and the community. We will use classroom learning within schools to solidify theoretical and professional foundations, while utilizing off-campus aesthetic education practices to gather feedback and optimize teaching, thereby forming a virtuous cycle of education where teaching and practice mutually reinforce one another.

3. Implementation Pathways for the Creative Integration Teaching Method in Dance Classes at Teacher Training Colleges

Based on the principles of aesthetic education in teacher training and drawing on school-based classroom teaching explorations and practical experience in grassroots aesthetic education, this paper establishes an implementation system for creative integration teaching tailored to teacher training colleges across four dimensions: content construction, classroom models, collaborative talent development, and institutional safeguards.

3.1 Content Integration: Constructing a Tiered Curriculum System Guided by the Disciplinary Core

Building upon the core framework of professional courses and integrating the relevant needs of public arts education, we have restructured the classroom curriculum system. In traditional folk dance, classical dance, and choreography courses, we retain core teaching modules—such as the study of professional repertoires, body technique training, and cultural interpretation—to solidify students' professional artistic foundations. At the same time, we introduce practical training in adapting and creating dance works rooted in everyday life, guiding students to distill classic movement patterns and cultural elements from traditional dance. By integrating regional folk customs and grassroots arts education contexts, students adapt these elements into accessible adaptations, creating dance works that combine artistic quality with popular appeal.

Drawing on practical experience from rural arts education outreach and children's arts education instruction, we have developed tiered teaching content tailored to the physical and psychological characteristics of different audiences: meeting the needs for engaging introductory experiences among young children, skill enhancement among adolescents, and recreational arts education among the general public at the grassroots level, ensuring that classroom learning outcomes can be precisely aligned with various social arts education contexts.

3.2 Integrated Teaching: Establishing a Tiered and Progressive Teacher-Training Classroom Model

Moving away from the traditional, one-way, rote-learning model of skills instruction, we have established a tiered and progressive integrated classroom paradigm. Grounded in the educational philosophy of public art services, we have designed graded classroom training modules: using engaging and accessible training content tailored to beginners to develop students' abilities in movement analysis, clear instruction, and interactive guidance; through group creative workshops and simulated teaching practice, students enhance their abilities in classroom organization, choreography, and refining artistic works; and through advanced repertoire study and artistic critical thinking training, the program maintains the artistic excellence and academic depth of professional instruction. This approach achieves a dual focus on inclusive education and professional development, comprehensively honing the overall teaching competencies of future teachers.

3.3 Talent Integration: Building a Two-Way Aesthetic Education Development System Linking Campus and Community

We will open channels for talent flow between university classrooms and community-based arts education, establishing a multi-dimensional practical training framework. Leveraging the collaborative efforts of faculty members, senior graduate students, and undergraduate students, we will regularly engage in public arts education services in communities, rural areas, and youth activity centers. We will integrate grassroots arts education practices into the classroom training system and academic evaluation framework, using real-world public teaching scenarios to hone students' arts education service capabilities.

At the same time, we invite grassroots aesthetic education practitioners and leading figures in folk arts to engage in classroom exchanges, sharing insights on public aesthetic preferences and challenges in grassroots teaching. This ensures that classroom teaching reforms align with the real needs of social aesthetic education, fostering a two-way talent co-development model where university professionals provide on-the-ground support and grassroots aesthetic education experiences enrich the classroom.

3.4 Mechanism Integration: Improving the Regularized Classroom Education Support System

Establish a systematic mechanism for teaching research and evaluation. Relying on the aesthetic education teaching and research platforms within schools and departments, regularly conduct seminars on creative integration teaching to identify existing issues in teaching practice and optimize teaching methods and course content. Construct a diverse and comprehensive academic evaluation system, moving away from single-skill assessments to incorporate classroom creative works, grassroots aesthetic education practices, and explorations in teaching innovation into the scope of comprehensive evaluation.

Coordinate and integrate aesthetic education resources both on and off campus; establish stable school-community aesthetic education practice bases; and refine long-term processes for practical teaching, the application of learning outcomes, and instructional iteration. This will enable creative integration teaching to move beyond fragmented and superficial classroom experiments, thereby forming a normalized, systematic, and sustainable mechanism for dance education in teacher training institutions.

4. Extending the Practice of Aesthetic Education Dissemination within the Framework of Integrated Teaching

The implementation of the creative integrated teaching model not only represents a structural reform of the educational system within dance classrooms at teacher training colleges but also reshapes the social dissemination landscape of dance aesthetic education in teacher training. It has transformed the previously closed form of aesthetic education—which was confined to campus classrooms, theater performances, and professional competitions—into an open, life-oriented, and inclusive social sphere of aesthetic education, continuously broadening the scope, emotional resonance, and social depth of dance aesthetic education in the new era. Compared to the traditional dance education model, which prioritizes skills over dissemination and the stage over public welfare, creative integration teaching comprehensively infuses the mindset of aesthetic education dissemination, social service awareness, and artistic transformation capabilities into the entire process of daily curriculum training and practical cultivation. This encourages teacher education students to gradually establish a comprehensive understanding of aesthetic education—characterized by “educating in the classroom, disseminating beauty to the public, and enriching the people through culture”—while solidifying their professional foundations and refining their teaching abilities. This truly achieves a value leap in higher normal college dance aesthetic education, shifting from “on-campus development” to “social empowerment.”

At the level of offline, in-person dissemination, creative integration teaching builds a bridge between professional dance art and grassroots audiences. Drawing on the tiered choreographic capabilities and popular adaptation thinking cultivated through coursework, teacher candidates can widely apply high-quality dance works—refined through artistic distillation, appropriately simplified, yet retaining their cultural essence—as well as distinctive folk dance rhythms and standardized foundational training content to diverse settings such as grassroots public performances, rural aesthetic education classes, community dance instruction, and local folk arts festivals. Unlike the high barriers to entry and highly specialized artistic presentations found in professional theaters, aesthetic education rooted in communities and rural areas places greater emphasis on participation, hands-on experience, and emotional resonance. Through intimate stage performances, face-to-face movement demonstrations, and the creation of an immersive artistic atmosphere, this approach breaks down the aesthetic barriers between professional dance and the general public, enabling social groups of all ages and skill levels to experience firsthand the physical beauty and cultural significance of dance art. The regular implementation of grassroots arts education enables high-quality dance resources from universities to

be continuously extended to local communities, gradually solidifying the foundation for offline dissemination in the development of arts education for all, and allowing professional dance to truly step out of campus and into the lives of the general public.

In terms of digital and new media dissemination, creative integration in teaching aligns with the trends in aesthetic education dissemination in the era of all-media, propelling dance education in teacher training programs beyond the constraints of time and space. Drawing on the choreographic skills and artistic deconstruction thinking acquired in the classroom, teacher education students break down systematic professional dance knowledge, standardized foundational training methods, and dance excerpts imbued with regional culture and traditional aesthetics into accessible, upbeat, and audience-friendly educational content. Through continuous content distribution via short-video platforms and online aesthetic education communities—using fragmented, visual, and engaging new media formats to disseminate dance education knowledge—this approach not only avoids the pitfalls of obscure professional theory and overly demanding professional repertoire but also leverages algorithmic advantages to reach a broader social audience. This enables the routine, inclusive, and widespread dissemination of high-quality university aesthetic education resources, building an online aesthetic education environment that is accessible anytime, anywhere.

At the same time, creative and integrated teaching further promotes deep collaboration between dance aesthetics education in teacher-training institutions and social public initiatives, achieving a multidimensional extension of the value of aesthetics education. Relying on course-based practical platforms, teacher-training students actively engage with local cultural and tourism development, rural cultural construction, grassroots public cultural services, and social public welfare initiatives in aesthetics education. They deeply integrate the interdisciplinary dance works created in the classroom, tiered teaching systems, and distinctive folk dance resources into specific tasks such as regional cultural heritage preservation, the development of rural spiritual civilization, and the enhancement of mass cultural activities. By using dance art as a medium to revitalize local folk culture, enrich the spiritual and cultural lives of grassroots communities, support the revitalization of rural aesthetic education, and improve the public cultural service system, the educational outcomes of dance classes at teacher training colleges are no longer limited to academic assessments and stage performances. Instead, they are transformed into a force for aesthetic education that nourishes people's livelihoods, permeates society, and empowers local cultural development, fully demonstrating the core social values of dance education in the new era: fostering virtue, educating through beauty, and cultivating character through culture.

5. Conclusion

The Creative Integration Teaching Method aligns closely with the reform direction for the transformation and upgrading of dance aesthetic education in teacher training colleges in the new era. Firmly grounded in the core educational philosophy of teacher training institutions—nurturing students and teachers through aesthetics—it fundamentally resolves the long-standing challenges in traditional dance classrooms, such as the one-dimensional focus on technical training, the compartmentalization of teaching environments, and the fragmentation of practical training. Traditional dance instruction in teacher-training institutions has placed excessive emphasis on stage techniques and repertoire presentation, resulting in a disconnect between professional training and societal aesthetic education needs. Although teacher-candidates possess solid performance skills, they generally lack the ability to teach aesthetic education to grassroots audiences, adapt works for public engagement, and provide community service.

Based on the aesthetic education logic of complementary and symbiotic relationships between professional and social dance, and grounded in real teaching scenarios in higher normal college classrooms, this study has achieved an organic integration of professional competence development and the cultivation of aesthetic education service capabilities through the integration and restructuring of course content, the iterative innovation of tiered classroom models, collaborative talent development pathways between the university and the community, and the establishment of systematic, long-term support mechanisms. While upholding the artistic integrity and cultural significance of professional dance, this teaching model promotes the dissemination of high-quality aesthetic education resources from universities to grassroots communities, enriching people's lives and enabling professional dance to move beyond the confines of the classroom and integrate into the everyday contexts of universal aesthetic education.

This educational paradigm is highly aligned with the training objectives for multidisciplinary dance and aesthetic education teachers in the new era. It provides a practical and feasible reference for dance curriculum reform at similar teacher training institutions nationwide, continuously driving the in-depth development of dance and aesthetic education in higher normal education toward greater professionalism, integration into daily life, and universal accessibility, thereby contributing to the high-quality, substance-oriented development of aesthetic education in teacher training in the new era.

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