



Multicultural Dance Education for Teaching Students with Disabilities



Introduction

My consideration of multicultural education concepts from the United States is involved primarily with their application to diversity issues in a pluralistic society. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2006), diversity issues relate to such factors as class, ethnicity and race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, physical and mental abilities, and age. These all relate to the concept of pluralism, with a pluralistic society composed of people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, multicultural education is grounded in a country's vision of democracy within a pluralistic society (Masunah, 2008; Masunah, 2011). A democratic country requires equity, equality, and social justice to fight against discrimination. All of these are reflected in the country's educational system, either in the organization of school systems or in approaches to teaching students.

I have experienced living in two democratic countries, the United States and Indonesia. I lived temporarily in the United States from 2003 to 2008 to study arts education while obtaining my doctoral degree at The Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio.

Indonesia is my home country, where I have lived and grown as an educator at the university level, specifically at Indonesia

University of Education in Bandung, West Java.

While in the U.S. I studied multicultural education concepts and practices in the classroom as well as doing doctoral research in Columbus. The research involved a case study of two United States dance teachers who implemented multicultural practices in the teaching of dance. I concluded that the concepts of multicultural education from the U.S can be adopted into the Indonesian context because both countries promote democracy (Masunah, 2008).

One of my interests when I did research in the U.S. during 2007 and 2008 was teaching dance to students with disabilities. Making use of Gollnick and Chinn's (2006) identifications of disabled students in the context of diversity and multicultural education, we find people with disabilities regarded as a category of "exceptionality" (p. 178).

Today, Indonesia's government pays high attention to different identities, including students with disabilities. In addition to providing special schools for them, a new policy that has been in effect since 2009 mandates the implementation of inclusive education that embraces students with different abilities in public schools.

When I returned to Indonesia I questioned how dance teachers in Indonesia provided education for students with disabilities. I did multiyear research from 2009 to 2012 to investigate the implementation of concepts of multicultural education and to explore approaches to teach dance to students with disabilities.

In this article I will formulate the concept of multicultural dance education, the role of analogies, and the teaching of dance to students with disabilities.

Multicultural Dance Education

Multicultural dance education can be promoted as a concept involving strategies for teaching dance to various social groups. It is also a teaching strategy using various dance forms from different cultures to better understand the people of those cultures. I will examine the works of Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001), Blocker (2004), and Vissicaro (2004) to provide a brief description of multicultural dance education concepts.

Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001) discuss multicultural art and visual culture education, arguing that "it is about life, from conception to death, and about how to live and learn about these complicated, ambiguous, and multidimensional processes.... Because art is a social and cultural expression of life and death" (p. 9). This conception addresses the complexity of people's cultures in the context of their life.

Within this concept, students are encouraged to learn about human experiences through art and visual culture in a more complicated manner historically, socially, culturally, and politically. The purpose here is to help the students "understand and function in a fulfilling, democratic, socially responsible, and meaningful way within their families, communities, states and nation, and the world" (p.

Juju Masunah is a professor in the Department of Dance Education at the Indonesia University of Education, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.



Examining Approaches in the United States & Indonesia

Juju Masunah



10). Through integrated curriculum and teaching practices in the classroom, the students become engaged to be advocates of the social reconstructionist philosophy.

Blocker's (2004) discussion of multicultural art education addresses diverse aesthetic art forms from various cultures. He stresses that the practice of teaching arts in the classroom is not only limited to the dominant Western aesthetic art standards, but it also needs to equally embrace diverse aesthetic arts and their authentic knowledge from non-Western arts and cultures. The students are encouraged to learn arts to better understand and appreciate various art worlds.

Like Blocker, Vissicaro (2004) is also concerned with multicultural dance education, more specifically the teaching of various dance forms from around the world. Vissicaro's multicultural dance education viewpoint is focused on ethnic cultures, and the purpose of studying them is to have impact on the development of people's knowledge system for understanding of other people's cultures.

According to Vissicaro (2004), dance is understood as "a human cultural phenomenon" (p. 3) that consists of people's ideas and experiences related to their world, their tradition, and their cultures. Therefore, she suggests multicultural dance education as a way to study dance practically and theoretically, in order to examine viewpoints and learn about people.

The concepts of multicultural art and visual cultural education, multicultural art education, and multicultural dance

education as discussed above are all teaching strategies demonstrating how to learn different and diverse cultural productions, including dance, art, and visual culture, in order to better understand people. I agree with these scholars since one of multicultural education's goals, as suggested by Banks (2007), is to understand people and their cultures in order to increase appreciation and tolerance. Therefore the arts, including dance, are an appropriate tool to teach students attitudes, a process in which teachers are encouraged to help students understand other people's cultures.

Furthermore, I present multicultural dance education as a concept involving strategies to teach diverse students to learn dance. Dance is a subject that allows for all students to participate. This is consistent with Gollnick and Chinn (2006), who encourage teachers to serve diversity in the classroom, regardless of social group backgrounds, including students with disabilities.

At a practical level, when I think about teaching dance to students with disabilities and how they learn dance as a subject matter, I view dance as an individual expression, using the elements of dance such as movement, energy, time, and space, when presenting dance forms. Dance also can be used as a tool to educate diverse students to learn concepts and practices from other subject matter fields, including the dance subject itself. I therefore encourage teachers to explore approaches to teach dance to students with disabilities.

The Role of Analogy

In developing approaches to teach dance to students with disabilities, I adopted what is called the *synectics model* proposed by Gordon. According to Joyce and Weil (2000), synectics was designed by William J. J. Gordon in 1961 for learning language, stories, and poems. Gordon used the model to foster a different approach in teaching creativity from what is usually implemented in the process of making art works or music. Synectics is one of the information processing family models related to creativity.

There is an intellectual and emotional process in creativity; therefore, Gordon designed the model "to increase problem solving capacity, creative expression, empathy, and insight into social relations" (Joyce & Weil, 2000, p. 222). In the creative process, analogy serves the role of enhancing creative thought.

Bailey (2012) explains that analogy provides explicit explanatory structure by using a comparison of what we already know or experience to understand certain concepts. He formulated two approaches to teaching analogies—inductive and deductive. The inductive approach is also called the bottom-up approach, because the concept comes up from the exploration of students' experiences to understanding the concept more easily. In contrast, the deductive approach is begun with the teacher presenting the concept to be explored; thus, it is alternatively called the top-down approach.

Bailey (2012) suggests teachers should

best use the inductive approach as a means for students to explore their familiar experiences in order to understand abstract concepts better.

In the synectics model, Joyce and Weil (2000) describe three types of analogies to be used: personal analogy, direct analogy, and compressed conflict. Personal analogy emphasizes empathetic involvement or an imitation by oneself of another object; meanwhile, direct analogy is a simple comparison of two objects or concepts. Finally, compressed conflict requires a representation of an object in contradiction or opposition. Analogies can stimulate students' thinking and imagination about something in the real world which will be expressed in creative ways, such as in movement, art, language, and other subject areas.

Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to actively develop instructions in order for students to understand the concepts of various content areas. In teaching dance, these analogies are always useful to guide movement explorations in creative ways, whether to understand the concepts of dance or other subjects. In summary, the role of analogies in teaching dance to students with disabilities is to enhance their intellectual and emotional processes in the practice of dancing, dance-making, and understanding the concepts.

Teaching Dance to Students with Disabilities

The purpose of teaching dance to students with disabilities is to help them to have a freedom of expression, motoric flexibilities, creativity, and social interaction. Dance teachers are challenged to educate students with disabilities no matter what their disabilities may be. Therefore, dance teachers should assume that while the students may be physically disabled, their abilities can be socially constructed.

This assumption is also suggested by Grant and Sleeter (2007). It is one of their approaches to teaching diversity, termed "teaching the exceptional and the culturally different" (p. 37). They encourage teachers to educate the students to successfully function in the classroom and later on in the society. The classroom is a part of the learning community, where the teacher and the students as well as the students and their peers interact with each other in the process of teaching and learning.

To understand the students' abilities and how they learn dancing, Kaufman (2006, p. 15) has identified five dance abilities—constituting body awareness, spatial awareness, listening to movement cues and music, watching movement cues, and visualization

skills and recall. These abilities relate to the four main sensory systems, namely visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. They are important as learning modalities to process information and transform it into practice. Students' learning modalities can also be used by the teachers to communicate dance instructions.

In a case study of Art IMPACT Middle School in Columbus, Ohio that I conducted (Masunah, 2008), I found that the dance teacher used body awareness and visual skills to teach non-mainstream students or students with Down syndrome. The dance teacher taught the concepts of the human body in connection to dance. For instance, she introduced the concept of time in dance by connecting it to the concept of oxygen circulation in the body. In this instance, the dance teacher combined two interrelated subject matters—dance and biology.

In her practice, the dance teacher introduced the body parts as part of a warm-up, and then she made a drawing on paper and also drew two lines on the floor, representing oxygen and blood circulation to the heart, using red and black colors. She used these drawings on the floor to guide students' movements and to visualize the pathways. The drawing on the paper was intended to make visual interpretations of the human body, including where the heart is located.

The students walked and moved with rhythm during the creative process. Students understood the concept of time after the teacher asked the students to press their arms and feel the pulse of their hearts. In this practice, students with disabilities came to understand concepts of other subject matter areas through a dance education activity. In other words, the dance teacher in Art IMPACT Middle School used personal analogy to compare dance movement to the understanding of the body system by which oxygen moves to the heart.

This case study invoked my curiosity about how the teachers in Indonesia taught dance to students with disabilities. I therefore examined two major approaches to teaching dance to students with disabilities in Indonesian schools—the imitation and the creative process.

Ariswati (2010) reported her case study research on teaching dance to Down syndrome students in Budi Luhur School in Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia. This teacher used a demonstration method, in which the teacher demonstrated dance's vocabularies, while students imitated the teacher's dancing. This method is very common in engaging students' memory of dance movements. The dance teacher

used movement cues and visual examples in order for students to imitate the movements. The teacher had positive attitudes to serve the students, and she believed that the students could dance.

Exploring Creative Approaches

From 2009 to 2010, I explored creative approaches to dance teaching for the blind in the School for the Blind, in Jalan Pajajaran, Bandung (Masunah, 2010). The school curriculum has no dance subject; instead, it includes only music. Therefore, the purpose of teaching dance to the blind was to provide equal opportunities for them to have freedom of expression and movement flexibilities. The dance teacher in this school used a creative approach engaging the elements of dance using tactile and auditory modalities to produce movement vocabularies. The dance teacher helped compose movement vocabularies to form a creative dance.

Subsequently, from 2011 to 2012, Milyartini and I adopted the synectics model as a conceptual framework to teach arts for students with disabilities and developed the syntax, beginning with preparation, then introduction to the concepts, exploration, creation, and ending with presentation (Masunah & Milyartini, 2012). Preparation is an initial warm-up to increase students' body awareness, and then the dance teacher introduces the concepts of dance elements, such as energy, time, and space.

The next steps are exploration and creation. These steps function to put the concepts into practice, where the students are encouraged to explore and create movements by making analogies. The role of the analogies is to stimulate students' thinking in order to understand the concepts and to create dance movements. The dance teacher helped the students compose and structure the movements to be presented at the end of the teaching and learning.

I also supervised studies by two graduate students concentrating in dance as part of the Arts Education Study Program at Indonesia University of Education or *Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia* (UPI) in Bandung. These studies implemented the synectics model to teach students with disabilities. The students involved were Reni Haerani and Heni Komalasari.

Haerani's study (2012) involved a student with autistic syndrome in Inclusive School Al-Mabrur, Baleendah in Bandung, West Java, and Komalasari (2014) taught the deaf and the blind in the Special School for the Deaf and the Special School for the Blind in Bandung, West Java. I will summarize their teaching as cases of using analogies to increase students' creativity.

Haerani (2012), a dance teacher, taught a student with autistic syndrome who was actively involved in the process of learning dance along with ten regular students. The autistic student had the characteristics of being unable to keep eye contact, being lonely, and being apathetic. Therefore, the purpose of teaching dance was to improve the student's social interaction and increase his creativity.

The dance teacher kept watching the student with autism in the context of the group in order to evaluate his social interaction. To increase creativity, the dance teacher used media, such as animals (ants) and people's activity to stimulate students to make analogies during exploring and creating the dance movements (Milyartini & Haerani, 2013).

Utilizing Energy and Time

The concepts of dance elements introduced to the students were comprised of energy and time. In particular, it was about how energy constructs strong, gentle, and weak movements, and how time accompanies the three different movements. The dance teacher instructed a group of students to make personal analogies by imitating ants carrying food. Then the students explored the movement by comparing the group of students directly to a group of ants looking for, carrying, and eating food.

In order to distinguish types of energy, the students made compressed analogies of strength and weakness. However, the student with autism did not engage much with exploring the ants as a tool to stimulate movement creation. Nevertheless, even though the student sometimes could not react to teacher's instructions, he listened to the teacher's voice. After three class meetings, the group of students created movement vocabularies based on analogies of ants' behavior.

Suddenly, the student with autism created a movement using a personal analogy, where he demonstrated a movement of pushing a car, showing strong energy. This initially surprised the dance teacher so then the teacher encouraged the autistic student to collaborate with other students to make a dance. The autistic student finally followed the teacher's instruction and responded to other students in the group. He also suggested some movements to the group and presented a creative dance together with the group.

Analogies in Dance

The use of analogies as expressed in dance movements changed an autistic student's behaviors to be more sociable

with the teacher and with classmates. Simultaneously, the student in the above case study increased his creativity by exploring and creating dance movements. This result would not have been possible without the dance teacher who cared for and appreciated the students.

Komalasari (2014), a dance teacher, used the synectics model in teaching dance to increase creativity of the deaf and the blind. With the nature of those disabilities, different sensory modalities to explore and find tools to stimulate analogies were given. For the deaf, the dance teacher used visual and kinesthetics perceptions to stimulate students' creation of analogies. The dance teacher used the concept of time first to teach the deaf, followed by the concept of energy.

In contrast, the teacher employed tactile and auditory sensory modalities for the blind in order to introduce the concept of energy and time. The students explored and created the movements using personal analogy, direct analogy, and compressed conflict.

For the deaf, the dance teacher instructed the students by engaging their visual sensory and kinesthetic perceptions. Before presenting the concept, the teacher led the preparation by doing a warm-up and identifying the body parts. The medium used for stimulating the students to make analogies is a drawing of people's activity in the rice field. By imitating the farmer working in the field, the teacher introduced the concept of time and energy.

The students made a personal analogy of the farmer's steps in the field, counting them with rhythmical procedures. Then, the students made a direct analogy by pretending to be a farmer walking while carrying hoes, followed by a compressed analogy by conflicting fast and slow steps. Finally, the students created movement vocabularies and presented "farmer dance" accompanied by music.

For the blind, after the students did preparation by simultaneously doing a warm-up and identifying parts of the body, like head, shoulder, arms, body, and legs, the dance teacher introduced the concept of energy using the masks from Cirebon, West Java. The students touched the masks, particularly Klana and Pamindo, using tactile sensory skills to interpret strong and charming characters. The students touched the masks with their tactile modality to study the shapes and sizes of the face, the eyes, the nose, and the mouth.

It is important to know that Klana has a long nose and mustache; the mouth is also opened, as if he is laughing, typical of strong male characters. Meanwhile,

Pamindo is chubby with small eyes, but they are opened a bit, looking at the environment, causing the nose to turn up. The teeth are set with a happy smile.

After touching the masks, the students made a personal analogy to represent strong movements, placing a greater emphasis on motion, with assertive, determined, and forceful action. They followed it with a direct analogy by imitating anger. Later on, the students explored compressed conflict with the weak energy. Furthermore, the teacher guided the students to practice the basic beats of 4/4, 2/4, 1/4 by clapping hands and counting.

With counting, the students continued exploring the movements of the head, shoulder, arms, body and legs. To learn the steps, the teacher provided a tool representing lines, and then the students explored the steps in a certain spot and moved to other spots with slow, medium, and fast tempos. Finally, the students were instructed to coordinate the movements of their body with the pattern of the steps, following the movement vocabulary based on strong and charming characters. Through this process of dance making, the blind increased their creativity.

Haerani and Komalasari used a deductive approach to teach dance employing analogies, because they introduced the concept first, followed by asking the students to explore analogies with movements. This approach is different from the teaching of language, where an inductive approach is recommended by Bailey (2012).

To seek and serve equity and equality for students with disability requires teachers' knowledge and skills about content, teaching methods, and attitudes. The content of dance includes the elements of dance and dance-making. The teachers need to have a good understanding of teaching methods for exploring and creating processes as well as stimulating students' thinking using analogies. Positive thinking and caring are important attitudes for dance teachers.

Summary and Recommendation

There are two different goals of multicultural dance education. First, multicultural dance education is a concept of teaching strategies to understand people's cultural productions using various dances. The main goal of learning various dances is to understand the people behind those dances. Second, multicultural dance education is a concept to educate diverse students, including those with disabilities, to learn to dance. The goal of this concept is to help students achieve high potential in learning dance.

Teaching dance to disabled students necessitates that teachers have the skills and knowledge of dance and methods of teaching, as well as attitudes directed to serve different students' abilities. An adaptation of the synectics model and exploration of analogies are therefore recommended for teach dance to the deaf, the blind, and students with autism. Some attitudes that should be possessed by teachers of students with disabilities are equity and equality, care, and attention.

It is important to note that these dimensions of multiculturalism in teaching dance are equally viable in the U.S. and in Indonesia, and thus likely in any other national or cultural setting.

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