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Implementing Gentile's Two-Stage Model in Modern Dance Education: A Course Development at Oriental Technical School, China

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Abstract
Background and Aim: Modern dance plays an important role in vocational education by fostering creativity, coordination, and self-expression. However, many vocational students lack prior dance experience, making it difficult to acquire basic skills. This study aimed to design and develop a modern dance course for beginner-level vocational students based on Gentile's Two-Stage Model of skill acquisition, providing a structured framework to support skill development from fundamental movements to creative dance performance.
Materials and Methods: The participants were all 30 female tenth-grade students aged 15–17 years from Oriental Technical School, Baoding, China. These students represented the entire female student population of the school's tenth grade, and there were no male students in the cohort. All participants voluntarily took part in the study and had no prior dance experience. The research employed a two-stage training program based on Gentile's model: (1) Cognitive and Control Stage (Weeks 1–6), focusing on task-based training to develop body awareness and basic motor skills; and (2) Automation and Performance Stage (Weeks 7–16), emphasizing skill integration, movement expression, and improvisational choreography. The course was designed according to 21st-century learning principles. An Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) assessment was conducted by three doctoral-level experts specializing in modern dance, vocational education, and curriculum development to evaluate the course's content validity.
Results: The IOC assessment showed values ranging from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating a high level of consistency between the course content and the intended learning objectives. Expert evaluations confirmed that the course structure aligns well with pedagogical goals and supports students' skill development.
Conclusion: This study demonstrates that the developed modern dance course effectively addresses the learning needs of vocational students with no prior dance experience. The course offers a valid and practical instructional model for enhancing dance education and skill acquisition in vocational settings.
Keywords: Modern Dance; Vocational Education; Skill Acquisition; Course Development; Instructional Design

Introduction

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has entered a new era of cultural and artistic development, with aesthetic education emphasized as a key component of national education policy. The Guidelines on Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era advocate for integrating aesthetic education into all levels of schooling to enhance students' artistic literacy and cultural confidence. Dance, as a core element of aesthetic education, plays a significant role in developing students' physical coordination, artistic expression, and cultural awareness. This policy framework underscores the strategic importance of dance education in nurturing well-rounded individuals and preserving cultural heritage.

Aligned with these policy initiatives, China's dance industry has experienced rapid growth. According to the 2022 Annual Report on China's Performing Arts Market issued by the Chinese Association of Performing Arts (2023), the total revenue of the performing arts sector reached 24.36 billion RMB in 2022. Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused a temporary decline, the market has rebounded swiftly. This economic expansion has created increasing demand for professional dance training and skilled practitioners in the performing arts sector.

In response to this demand, vocational education in China has strengthened its focus on dance training, particularly through school-enterprise partnerships. These collaborations aim to align academic instruction with industry needs, providing students with hands-on training and enhancing their employability. The Guiding Opinions of the CPC Central Committee on Promoting High-Quality

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Development of Cultural and Arts Vocational Education in the New Era emphasize the importance of integrating industry resources into vocational education (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China & Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Baoding Oriental Technical School, located in Hebei Province, has actively responded to this policy by partnering with the Baoding Public Cultural Center to offer a modern dance program for its students.

However, the implementation of modern dance education in vocational schools faces several challenges. Many vocational students, including all thirty tenth-grade female students at Baoding Oriental Technical School, lack prior dance experience. Conventional pedagogical approaches in dance education often fail to meet the needs of such zero-baseline learners. Traditional teaching methods tend to focus heavily on technique and repetition, neglecting the development of creativity, movement fluency, and independent learning skills (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Recent research highlights the need for innovative instructional models that facilitate progressive skill acquisition and support students' cognitive and physical development (Phubanchuen, 2022; Zhang, 2021; Li, 2020; Gou, 2023).

Technical proficiency forms the foundation of all dance training. For vocational students, mastering fundamental dance skills is essential not only for improving physical coordination and balance but also for enhancing professional competencies and artistic expression. Structured dance training contributes significantly to students' physical and cognitive development, promoting movement efficiency and reducing the risk of injury (Ljubojevic et al, 2020). Within vocational education, a well-designed dance curriculum is crucial for preparing students to meet the demands of the performing arts industry (Yang, 2023; Lin, 2023).

To address these challenges, this study adopts Gentile's Two-Stage Model of Skill Acquisition as the theoretical foundation for developing a modern dance course tailored to vocational students. This model provides a systematic framework for guiding learners from the initial cognitive and control stage, where fundamental movement patterns are introduced and practiced, to the automation and performance stage, where students refine their skills and apply them creatively (Gentile, 1972; Magill & Anderson, 2017; Coker, 2017). By incorporating this model, the course aims to provide clear learning pathways that support students' skill development and artistic growth.

Furthermore, the course integrates principles of 21st-century learning, emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. School-enterprise collaboration is also incorporated to provide students with real-world learning experiences and enhance their professional readiness (Jiang & Du, 2023).

In summary, this study aims to design and develop a modern dance course based on Gentile's Two-Stage Model of Skill Acquisition to address the needs of novice learners in vocational education. The research seeks to provide a structured, scientifically grounded curriculum that enables students to acquire essential dance skills, enhance their creative abilities, and improve their employability. This study will benefit vocational school students, dance educators, and curriculum developers by offering a replicable model for effective modern dance education in vocational settings.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to design, develop, and validate a structured modern dance course for beginner-level female students at Oriental Technical School in Baoding City, China, based on Gentile's Two-Stage Model of Skill Acquisition. Specifically, this study aims to develop a 16-week modern dance course that systematically progresses from fundamental movement skills to creative dance performance, ensuring that the course content aligns with pedagogical principles and supports students' skill development in technical proficiency, physical coordination, and artistic expression. Additionally, the course will be evaluated through expert assessment using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to verify its content validity and instructional effectiveness. The research seeks to provide a replicable instructional framework for modern dance education in vocational school settings. To guide this study, two research questions are posed: (1) How can Gentile's Two-Stage Model be effectively applied to structure a modern dance course for beginner-level vocational students? and (2) To what extent does the developed

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modern dance course align with pedagogical principles and instructional methodologies, as evaluated by dance education experts?

Literature review

The integration of modern dance training into vocational education plays a crucial role in balancing artistic expression with the development of technical skills, physical coordination, and emotional expressiveness. Modern dance, distinct from classical ballet, emphasizes adaptability, creativity, and fluid movement, making it particularly accessible and relevant to vocational students (Smith-Autard, 2014). Furthermore, modern dance fosters teamwork, self-awareness, and problem-solving skills, aligning with 21st-century learning principles (Risner & Anderson, 2015). However, despite its pedagogical potential, modern dance education in vocational schools often lacks a structured and standardized training framework (Wu et al, 2020). Key challenges include the absence of formal curricula, limited focus on foundational skill development, and insufficient pedagogical expertise among instructors. These issues are compounded by minimal integration of cognitive learning theories such as Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model and Bloom's Taxonomy (Magill & Anderson, 2017).

Skill acquisition theories offer a scientific foundation for progressive movement learning, cognitive engagement, and motor control in dance education. Among these, Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model provides a structured framework for guiding students from basic movement training to advanced dance performance. The model consists of two stages: the Cognitive and Control Stage, which emphasizes the development of fundamental movement patterns, spatial awareness, and motor coordination through guided exercises and feedback; and the Automation and Performance Stage, which focuses on refining movement precision, stability, and adaptability through open and closed skill training in various performance contexts (Magill & Anderson, 2017). By applying this model, modern dance programs in vocational schools can systematically support students' skill progression and artistic development.

Additionally, Bloom's Taxonomy complements Gentile's model by guiding the formulation of clear learning objectives and assessment criteria. The cognitive domains of Bloom's Taxonomy—ranging from remembering and understanding to analyzing, evaluating, and creating—align with the progressive skill development stages in Gentile's framework. This theoretical integration enables instructors to design instructional strategies that foster both technical proficiency and higher-order thinking skills, ensuring a comprehensive approach to modern dance education.

Modern dance education must also incorporate 21st-century learning methodologies to promote student engagement, collaboration, and digital competence. Collaborative learning fosters peer interaction and teamwork in creative movement exercises, whereas task-based learning (TBL) and problem-based learning (PBL) utilize dance techniques to address real-world scenarios, thereby enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Technological advancements further support modern dance training through tools such as video analysis, virtual reality (VR) for spatial awareness, and online learning platforms (Kozel, Griffiths, & Ginslov, 2021; Chan et al, 2011). By integrating these digital strategies, vocational dance programs can enhance instructional effectiveness and support students' creative development.

To ensure scientific rigor, modern dance course development requires adherence to structured pedagogical principles, including goal-oriented design, progressive skill development, student-centered learning, and assessment-driven instruction. A well-designed course should facilitate students' transition from fundamental movement execution to complex choreography, accommodate diverse learning needs, and incorporate practical performance opportunities. The use of evaluation methods such as the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) enables objective validation of course content, ensuring alignment with pedagogical objectives and facilitating systematic refinement based on expert feedback (Coker, 2017).

In summary, the literature underscores the necessity of a structured, theoretically grounded approach to modern dance education in vocational settings. By integrating Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model and Bloom's Taxonomy within a 21st-century learning framework, vocational modern dance programs can effectively support students' technical, cognitive, and creative development. This integrated

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approach addresses existing gaps in vocational dance education by providing a clear instructional structure, promoting student engagement, and ensuring curriculum validity through expert evaluation.

Conceptual Framework

This study employs a conceptual framework integrating Gentile's Two-Stage Model and Bloom's Taxonomy to structure the modern dance curriculum and guide skill progression. The framework consists of four key components: theoretical foundation, two-phase learning structure, expert evaluation, and learning outcomes. Gentile's model is operationalized through a two-phase design—Stage 1 (Basic Training, Weeks 1–6) focuses on fundamental movement skills, while Stage 2 (Artistic Development, Weeks 7–16) emphasizes creative application and performance. Bloom's Taxonomy complements this by aligning learning objectives across cognitive domains, ensuring students advance from basic knowledge to creative expression. Task-based and collaborative learning strategies are integrated to promote engagement and skill development. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) is used for expert evaluation, validating the curriculum's content and structure. This framework addresses the gaps identified in the literature by providing a structured, theory-driven approach to modern dance education, ensuring effective learning and pedagogical soundness.

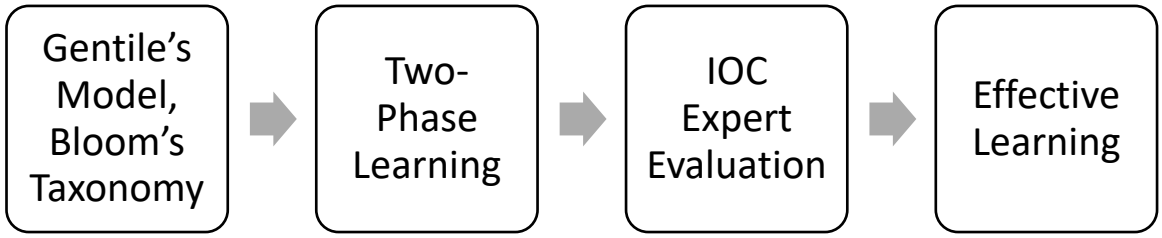

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of Structured Modern Dance Course

Methodology

Research Design

This study follows a two-phase design: the first phase involves the development of a modern dance course for beginner-level students, based on Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model and Bloom's Taxonomy. The second phase involves expert validation of the course using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The course is structured to ensure progressive skill development from fundamental movements to creative performance. The methodology is designed to assess the alignment of the course content with pedagogical objectives and its effectiveness in supporting student skill acquisition and artistic expression.

Research Subjects

The research involves 30 female tenth-grade students from Baoding City Oriental Technical School, all of whom are beginner-level learners with no prior dance experience. The sample group was selected using a census approach, meaning all students in the grade were included. In addition, three experts with doctoral-level qualifications in modern dance, vocational education, and curriculum development are involved in evaluating the course structure and content. They provide feedback based on their professional expertise to ensure the validity and effectiveness of the course design.

Research Tools

The primary tool for this study is the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) evaluation form, which is used to assess the alignment between the course content and its intended pedagogical objectives. The course framework is developed using Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model, which focuses on the cognitive and control stages (Weeks 1–6) and the automation and performance stages (Weeks 7–16). Bloom's Taxonomy is used to guide the formulation of learning objectives across cognitive domains.

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Experts rate the alignment using a scale of +1 (full alignment), 0 (partial alignment), and -1 (no alignment). A mean IOC score of 0.67 or higher indicates that the course is well-aligned with its intended goals.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involves calculating the mean IOC score for each component of the course. If the mean IOC score is 0.67 or higher, the course is deemed to be valid and aligned with pedagogical principles. Any component that receives a mean score below 0.75 will be reviewed and refined based on expert feedback. The analysis ensures that the course content is systematically aligned with the theoretical models and learning objectives. Statistical methods such as descriptive statistics are used to summarize the results of the IOC evaluation, ensuring the validity of the course and its instructional effectiveness.

Results

Restatement of Research Objectives

This study aimed to (1) develop a structured modern dance course for beginner-level vocational students based on Gentile's Two-Stage Model, and (2) validate the content and instructional alignment of the course through expert evaluation using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC).

Development of the Modern Dance Course

The course was systematically developed over 16 weeks and structured into two instructional phases following Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Model. Phase 1 (Weeks 1–6) focused on cognitive and control learning, including task-based training, movement breakdown exercises, and the development of foundational technical skills. Phase 2 (Weeks 7–16) emphasized automation and performance, incorporating creative expression, improvisation, and choreographic activities. Bloom's Taxonomy was integrated to guide the course objectives, progressing from lower-order cognitive skills (Remembering, Understanding, Applying) in Phase 1 to higher-order skills (Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating) in Phase 2. 21st-century learning strategies, such as collaborative learning and digital learning tools, were also embedded to enhance student engagement.

IOC Evaluation Results

The course content and structure were evaluated by three experts in modern dance, vocational education, and curriculum development using the IOC method. Each expert independently rated the alignment of 14 course components with the instructional objectives. The scoring scale used was +1 for full alignment, 0 for partial alignment, and -1 for misalignment. The IOC analysis yielded a perfect score of 1.0 across all components and all experts (Table 1), indicating full agreement on the alignment and validity of the course design.

Table 1 Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Analysis for Evaluating Dance Education Criteria

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC Score	Interpretation
1	Knowledge Accumulation	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
2	Skill Development	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
3	Creativity Enhancement	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
4	Modern Dance Educational Philosophy	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
5	Bloom's Taxonomy Application	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned

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No.	Evaluation Criteria	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC Score	Interpretation
6	Gentile's Skill Acquisition Model	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
7	Integration of International & Local Standards	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
8	Creativity & Innovation (21st Century Learning)	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
9	Critical Thinking (21st Century Learning)	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
10	Collaboration & Teamwork	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
11	Course Organization	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
12	Teaching Activity Design	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
13	Application of Teaching Methods	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned
14	Teaching Evaluation & Feedback	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Fully aligned

The consistently perfect scores are statistically unusual. This outcome may be attributed to the following factors: (1) the course was developed based on established theoretical models with clearly defined instructional objectives, (2) the experts were highly experienced and familiar with curriculum development, and (3) the evaluation criteria were precise and directly related to course components. Nevertheless, such uniform agreement could reflect confirmation bias or limited critical divergence among the experts. Although no revisions were required based on the IOC scores, qualitative feedback from the experts suggested minor refinements, such as increasing the duration of improvisational exercises and enhancing digital learning resources.

Final Course Structure and Implementation Considerations

Based on the expert evaluation, the final version of the modern dance course retained its two-phase structure, with weekly learning objectives progressively advancing from basic skill acquisition to creative performance (Table 2). The course design ensured alignment with pedagogical principles and addressed the research objectives.:

Table 2 Structured Course for Modern Dance Training: Phases, Activities, and Learning Outcomes

Week	Phase	Main Focus	Activities	Expected Learning Outcome	Bloom's Cognitive Level
1–2	Phase 1	Introduction to Modern Dance & Movement Vocabulary	Yoga stretching, spinal articulation, and basic movement drills	Develop fundamental movement skills and body awareness	Remembering & Understanding

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Week	Phase	Main Focus	Activities	Expected Learning Outcome	Bloom's Cognitive Level
3–4	Phase 1	Modern Dance Techniques & Coordination	Strength training, rhythm exercises, directional pas de bourrée	Improve coordination and spatial awareness	Understanding & Applying
5–6	Phase 1	Refinement of Basic Skills & Strength Training	Deep plié work, spinal mobility drills	Enhance physical strength and technique precision	Applying
7	Phase 2	Modern Dance & Other Styles	Watching and analyzing dance works	Understand cross-genre influences in modern dance	Analyzing
8–9	Phase 2	Breath and Movement Integration	Bartenieff fundamentals, breathing exercises	Develop fluidity and movement efficiency	Analyzing & Applying
10–11	Phase 2	Spine and Head-Tail Connection	Contraction & release, roll-down sequences	Strengthen full-body coordination	Applying & Analyzing
12–13	Phase 2	Expressive Movement & Dynamics	Leg swings, lunges, lateral rolls	Explore expressive techniques	Evaluating
14	Phase 2	Performance Preparation	Rehearsal, artistic refinement	Refine presentation and artistry	Evaluating
15	Phase 2	Improvisation I: Self-Exploration	Guided movement exercises	Develop a personal improvisational style	Creating
16	Phase 2	Improvisation II: External Inspiration	Mirroring, group movement tasks	Foster collaboration and spontaneous creativity	Creating

While the course received positive validation results, certain implementation considerations were identified. The course requires qualified dance instructors familiar with skill acquisition theory, adequate dance studio facilities, and access to digital learning tools. Adaptations may be necessary when applying the course in different vocational school contexts, depending on institutional resources and student demographics.

Discussion

This study aimed to develop a structured modern dance course for beginner-level vocational students based on Gentile's Two-Stage Skill Acquisition Theory, Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, and 21st-century learning principles. The research also sought to validate the course content and instructional design through expert evaluation using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The findings confirm that these objectives were successfully achieved. The developed course employed a hierarchical, two-phase structure that effectively supported students' progressive skill development, transitioning from foundational movement acquisition to creative dance performance. The IOC evaluation results, yielding a perfect score of 1.0 across all criteria, further affirmed the validity and pedagogical soundness of the course design.

The application of Gentile's model within the course framework demonstrated that Stage 1 (Cognitive and Control Phase, Weeks 1–6) effectively facilitated foundational technique acquisition, including body alignment, rhythm awareness, and movement control. Stage 2 (Automation and Performance Phase, Weeks 7–16) enabled students to develop advanced skills in improvisation, artistic

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interpretation, and creative expression. The integration of Bloom's Taxonomy ensured a systematic progression of cognitive engagement, guiding students from lower-order skills (Remembering, Understanding, Applying) to higher-order competencies (Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating). Additionally, the incorporation of 21st-century learning methodologies—task-based learning, collaborative exercises, and digital tools—enhanced student engagement, critical thinking, and artistic creativity.

This study offers several theoretical contributions. It demonstrates how the integration of Gentile's model with Bloom's Taxonomy can establish a structured and scientifically grounded instructional framework for modern dance education, addressing existing gaps in vocational dance training. Furthermore, it extends the application of cognitive learning theories to the field of dance education, illustrating their relevance and effectiveness in supporting skill acquisition among novice learners.

In practical terms, the validated course framework provides vocational schools and curriculum designers with a replicable model for modern dance instruction. It offers clear guidance on course organization, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes, supporting student development in both technical proficiency and artistic expression. The study also emphasizes the importance of qualified dance educators familiar with skill acquisition theory, adequate studio facilities, and digital learning resources for successful course implementation. These findings hold implications for vocational education policies, highlighting the value of integrating arts education into technical training programs to enhance student employability and creative competencies.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The expert panel comprised only three specialists, which may have limited the diversity of perspectives and introduced potential evaluative bias. The consistently perfect IOC scores, while affirming course validity, may reflect confirmation bias or a lack of critical divergence among experts. Additionally, the absence of empirical student testing restricts the ability to directly measure learning outcomes and long-term course impact. Contextual limitations within the Chinese vocational education system, such as resource constraints and institutional differences, may also affect the broader applicability of the course framework.

Future research should address these limitations by conducting empirical studies involving pre-test and post-test evaluations of student learning outcomes. Longitudinal research could examine the sustained impact of the course on students' technical and creative development. Comparative studies across different vocational schools and cultural contexts would further validate the course's adaptability and effectiveness. Moreover, future research should explore teacher and student perspectives on course implementation and identify factors influencing instructional quality. Integrating digital innovations and interdisciplinary approaches could also enhance the future development of vocational dance education.

In conclusion, this study provides a pedagogically sound and scientifically validated modern dance curriculum tailored for beginner vocational students. It contributes to the theoretical and practical advancement of dance education, offering valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. By emphasizing structured instructional design, the study underscores the potential of theory-based approaches to foster student engagement, skill mastery, and creative expression in vocational education contexts.

Recommendation

Building upon these findings, this study proposes several recommendations to enhance modern dance education through structured, evidence-based methodologies. First, empirical validation of course implementation is necessary to assess the structured dance course's effectiveness in practical settings. Future studies should incorporate pre-test vs. post-test evaluations to measure students' skill development, student feedback, and observation logs to capture engagement levels and perceived learning effectiveness, and longitudinal follow-up studies to track skill progression and career impact beyond course completion. Second, integrating a mixed-methods research approach would provide a comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes by combining quantitative data, such as performance assessments, rubric-based scoring, and motion analysis, with qualitative insights from student interviews, peer and instructor evaluations, and

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self-reflection reports. Additionally, the use of technology-based analysis, including video motion tracking, could further enhance the evaluation of movement fluidity, technical execution, and artistic interpretation. Third, expanding digital and blended learning strategies is essential for adapting modern dance education to contemporary educational settings. Future course development should explore flipped classroom models for self-directed learning, blended learning approaches that combine in-person practical training with virtual coaching and feedback mechanisms, and emerging technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to enhance spatial awareness and movement analysis. Fourth, future research should further explore the aesthetic and creative dimensions of dance education by examining the role of improvisational techniques in fostering artistic individuality, investigating how multimedia and interdisciplinary collaborations shape contemporary dance practices, and developing assessment frameworks that measure creative thinking and artistic innovation beyond standardized technical evaluations. Finally, the scalability and adaptability of the proposed curriculum should be tested in diverse educational settings, including general arts education programs, culturally diverse curricula integrating regional dance traditions, and professional dance training institutions where advanced modifications can be implemented for higher-level learners. By adopting these recommendations, modern dance education can continue to evolve, ensuring scientifically validated learning experiences that enhance technical mastery, cognitive engagement, and artistic expression for students at various proficiency levels.

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