

# The Role of the Teacher of Dance of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Art of Education

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## Abstract

This article aims at a critical analysis of the role and importance of the dance teacher in the 21st century.

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## Introduction

The noble office of teaching dance, is considerably challenging in the meanderings of the 21st century, as many obstacles appear on the arduous path of teaching arts. As obstacles we can mention: the training of teachers, prejudices about dance, the change in the labor market, technology and the devaluation of the teacher as a professional.

Both the conventional education teacher and the dance teacher face a society riddled with prejudice and a growing devaluation of the educator's role, leading to a more critical position on how art educators should position themselves today [1-3].

Therefore, it is natural that in the scope of this artistic modality, there are different behavioral profiles, however in order to play this role between two types: Traditional and Libertarian. These types of profiles, which fit both normal education and the arts, were conceptualized by Paulo Freire in the context of traditional pedagogy but that we can equate these models (Traditional and Libertarian) with the types of dance teachers of today. The first concerns that professional who reproduces what he has learned; the second, on the other hand, deals with a teacher who adapts to the environment and innovates in his classes and in the way of passing on knowledge.

## Background

Discuss and argue about the role and profile of the dance teacher in this century. Many authors bring lessons and concepts that can be incorporated into the dance world. All research was based on the concepts of art education and pedagogy by authors [3-5]. It is of utmost importance to discuss and critically and reflexively change the profile of dance teachers over the years. Specifically in the 21st century, several researchers and authors have dealt with this new way of passing artistic knowledge. Each year new students appear and a growing change in attitude by educators is necessary.

Another important author in this discussion is Isabel Marques, who talks about making her feel that she must be seen as the main one in dance, and that must be taken into consideration by teachers [6].

## Main Focus of the Chapter

### The Role of the Dance Teacher Over the Years

Many changes have occurred over the years with regard to the profile of the dance teacher. The evolution was shown both in the way of teaching and in the treatment with students. According to North American studies we have to:

**Authoritarian Teaching Practices in Dance** The evolution of dance education has striking similarities to the evolutionary path of general education in several ways. However, the ideas of ethical punishment and concern with Carmichael 12 psychological well-being are not found at the forefront of many dance educations that my peers and I have observed and experienced (Student Interview: Amy). In order to fully understand why dance is taught the way that it is, an investigation of the pedagogical history of the art form is necessary. Dance is an act that is as old as humans themselves. Humanity was certainly experiencing rhythmic bodily movement during the time of the Neanderthals; however, codified dance education did not emerge until far later. Ballet grew exponentially in the 17th century in the courts of King Louis XIV as a political tool meant to create hierarchical systems and psychological and bodily dependence on the monarchy. At the time of Louis XIV's reign, Versailles was filled with courtiers working to attain technical perfection in order to earn greater status in the eyes of the King (Homans). The formulation of a technique that required so much specificity meant that the courtiers submitted to the King's dance teachers and choreographers as authoritarian figures in an effort to maintain their place at Versailles. Ballet quickly evolved from its role as a political tool to a spectacular art form. It continued to imbue a similar sense of submission throughout the course of its evolution. Ballet's



appeal led it to spread rapidly throughout Europe and later America. American ballet began as a rather pathetic attempt to imitate European culture, but later progressed into its own fiercely innovative brand [1].

Thus, the educator's role has shaped social and cultural changes around the world. The main differences occurred in the training of teachers and in the separation of the methodologies used in traditional education and in dance classes.

Teachers who currently work with dance at school have higher education in physical education, artistic education, dance or in another area of education, some without a specific course and who only work in academies with classical ballet and other modalities. Many teachers only have training as dancers or, in some cases they have training to teach dance. In Brazil, there is no requirement for specific training, therefore, there is no definitive answer for which training is appropriate to be considered a dance teacher. This lack of regulation causes some of the obstacles mentioned above, which corroborate the need for a constant reinvention of the professional.

The dance / arts teacher aims to teach art and culture intrinsic to dance modalities. In this way, their work is configured to transmit objective and subjective knowledge and knowledge. Teachers from other disciplines, such as mathematics, have the purpose of transmitting specific and technical knowledge, which follow a methodology determined by standards.

Thus, we can state that the teaching of dance requires skills and constant updating in the way of passing on techniques and a creative capacity to deal with the new types of students of this century.

### Senses in Dance

At the moment when the teacher chooses to teach, here the action of teaching is understood the task of instilling in the student a thought teaching one to - dialogically and critically - see the world that surrounding, rather than merely a transference of knowledge.

About the dance education it is appropriate at this beginning to reproduce Rubem Alves's concept of education:

It is a way and a way; It is a path that imposes itself from outside and the path we take in it. They should therefore be indivisible and inseparable. Like the two looks with which we open ourselves to the world. Like the two faces: the visible and the hidden, of who we are. The paths exist to be traversed, and to be recognized inwardly by those who follow them.

Every activity that involves our body as physical matter also reverberates in our senses and emotions. Dance allows us to convey our feelings through our gestures, so the educator teaches his students how to express themselves in the art world, which creates an awareness that the teacher's role goes beyond the classroom.

About the importance of this make-feel Isabel Marques says that this allows us a different kind of perception, discrimination and criticism of dance, its relations with ourselves and with the world.

Thus we can develop a critical look at the world and our role in it. Both teacher and student must prioritize a good body-mind and mind-body relationship so that their professional and personal lives go together through art.

"Dance, therefore, as one of the ways of education of the creative and critical body, becomes practically indispensable to live present, critics and participants in today's society." [6].

### The Teacher of Dance of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The author of this essay considers that, as an inspiring agent, the teacher should prioritize the dialogue and the creative freedom of his students, but at the same time, they must apply the discipline and the repetitions required for the desired technical development. The weighting of these extremes produces complete masters, however, any attempt to establish an ideal model of dance teacher to be followed is light and misleading, for the art of movement is not an exact science.

In order to base the central thesis of this sketch, it is opportune to cite João FD (2016) [4], who teaches that Art-Education should not be confined to the final product, but to the creation process, therefore, it can not be influenced by imposed by the massification of culture. Art, being an act of courage and rebellion in its nature, must subversively oppose school conformism and the convenience of reproducing old Cartesian formulas, according to the author.

In general terms, according to one's own understanding, in teaching it should be remembered that the movements taught to students must aim not only at an immediate immediate outcome, but also an inner process of creation and discovery of emotions.

Following this line of reasoning, a valid argument in favor of teacher hybridity is the defense of a libertarian profile, as directed by the illustrious Freire P (2001) [5], which expresses the importance of dialogic action in the educational process: praxis, which implies the action and reflection of men on the world to transform it. "The dialogue between teacher and student is a way to strengthen critical thinking, according to Freire.

Only in an environment free of rigid formulas and exacerbated charges, the student is able to develop as a creative and free agent, as shown by a definition of creativity by Maria Lúcia Aranha (1993): "developed or repressed. Its development happens when the school environment, family, friends and leisure offer conditions for the exercise of exploratory behavior."

It is understood from such ideas that the guiding thread between creativity and the student is the teacher, that is, it should act as a guide to a world of infinite possibilities. Therefore, the teaching of dance must be translated into an exchange of experiences and, above all, a dialogue between master and apprentice (who are confused because there is no protagonism or a hierarchy in this relation).

However, according to the author's personal impressions of this article, the pure lesson full of freedom also demands brakes, in the sense that technique is necessary and sometimes essential for physical injury and for the realization of the dreams of those who seek professionalism. These "brakes" here proposed consist of the use of repetitions in class and discipline, when necessary. However, using some traditional methods does not mean regression or the application of an outdated teaching system. On the contrary, a teacher who holds effective learning strategies and mixes them with new attitudes shows an immeasurable wealth of knowledge. The hybridity defended in this theoretical piece is in line with the words of Roger C (1976) [3], because they define that in the so-called School of New Education education itself is not a mission of the teacher; it is not a teaching activity on the part of the teacher. Education is intrinsically an activity that starts from the child, that is, the task, the work and the achievement of the child. Education is a work that belongs to the child who does not have to be educated or educated, but only has to live. This is the meaning of Rousseau's message. It's enough to live to learn and understand." There are infants who best adapt to fixed rules and repetitions



(necessary for classical ballet, for example) and others that will develop better in freer styles (urban dances, belly dancing, etc.). In any case, there must first be an adjustment between the child and the desired modality so that the dance is pleasant and healthy. The behavioral profile, according to their own opinions, varies according to how the teacher learned the dance that teaches, so understanding that it is normal to repeat old habits is the first step towards professional growth. This personality trait is also built with the need to adapt the professional to the reality imposed on him: nowadays, there is a commercialization of dance (choreography as a quantified product and not as something of inestimable value). How can one not be affected by such a scenario? Furthermore, what is the correct way to apply the foundations of Art-Education (Interdisciplinarity, Interaction, Integration and Inclusion) in dance?

Taking into account everything that was reported in this explanation, it remains to conclude, in a brief way, that the current dance teacher must prioritize the concepts and foundations of the so-called art education (interdisciplinarity, interculturality, among others) to adapt to the new times and relate the teaching the arts with the subjects of traditional pedagogy.

The principle of interdisciplinarity is one of the fundamental foundations of Art Education. This is due to the fact that the interrelationship of the fields of knowledge helped to conceptualize the aforementioned discipline.

According to the dictionary, interdisciplinarity' is an adjective that qualifies what is common to two or more disciplines or other branches of knowledge. It constitutes a process of connection between the disciplines, (diction). These relations between the areas of knowledge have the purpose of improving the learning process. When we know the concept of a term we can better understand its purpose and value in the discipline. Thus, to speak of interdisciplinarity is to realize that the integrated study of the subjects helps the learning process and thus generates better academic results.

Regarding the role of current society and technologies in Brazilian education, we have to, according to Ana Mae Barbosa:

Interdisciplinarity is the epistemological condition of postmodernity, and interculturality, the political condition of democracy. The alliance between these two basic conditions of life, contemporary with flexible and multiplying technologies, will guarantee a humanism in constant

reconstruction to respond to the imponderable and permanent social changes.

The constant social and educational change calls for different means and processes to meet the intellectual demand of our society. Both interdisciplinarity and interculturality underlie the notions of the current education system.

## Conclusion

For these and other questions, according to the author's ideology, fidelity to personal convictions and a work in harmony between a libertarian profile (dialogue and creativity) and a traditional attitude (repetitions and discipline) seems to be the most appropriate way. In particular, in the pricing of choreography and academy classes, the most appropriate strategy is the application of Interculturality (interaction), since knowing the value of dance for various people, causes students to critically reflect on the value they give to generic works without (apparent) cultural significance. For "the music that makes me laugh or cry, the food that appeals to me or is indigestible, the caress that makes me happy or sad; all this is related to my own cultural roots, to my aspirations and to those specific ways of understanding and feeling life, which are peculiar to the culture to which I belong."

In short, based on the above, it is believed that no teacher should be equal to the other, in the sense of not having a perfect model of teacher, that is, hybridity was a way to join the best of two worlds: the efficiency of traditional rigidity and the creative freedom defended [5]. Creating a pleasant atmosphere for the student should be the main objective when teaching dance steps, in addition to presenting them a new colorful way of seeing life is a gift from artist to artist.

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