A Study on the Introduction and Practice of Dance Choreographic Thinking in Higher Film, Television, and Drama Education

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Abstract: As higher film, television, and drama education continues to pursue innovation and breakthroughs, the traditional teaching model centered on dialogue and performance is gradually showing its limitations and is unable to meet the demands of contemporary film and television drama for comprehensive artistic expression. As a creative thinking model that uses the body as a medium and centers around emotion and narrative, its introduction into film and television drama education can help students build a more comprehensive artistic cognitive system and enhance the visual expressiveness and emotional delivery of their works. Based on the practical needs of higher film, television, and drama education, this paper analyzes the core characteristics of dance choreographic thinking, explores feasible approaches for its introduction, and identifies specific implementation strategies based on practical teaching practices. This study aims to provide new insights for curriculum reform in film and television drama education and help cultivate interdisciplinary talents with artistic literacy. The study finds that through curriculum integration, thinking training, and practical guidance, dance choreographic thinking can effectively address the shortcomings of traditional teaching, promote the evolution of film and television drama works from "linguistic narrative" to "multidimensional narrative," and cultivate more innovative practitioners for the industry.

Keywords: Higher Film, Television, and Drama Education, Dance Choreographic Thinking, Curriculum Integration, Teaching Practice, Artistic Literacy

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the film, television, and drama industries, audiences are demanding higher artistic quality and aesthetic sophistication. Single performance and narrative formats are no longer sufficient to meet market demand. Currently, most higher film, television, and drama education institutions still focus on dialogue training, script analysis, and stage scheduling. While this strengthens students' foundational skills, it lacks significant strengths in developing their physical expression, spatial narrative, and emotional visualization abilities. Dance choreographic thinking, centered on "body storytelling," emphasizes conveying emotion and driving plot through the design of body movements, the control of rhythm, and the use of space. This aligns closely with the pursuit of "visual expression" and "emotional resonance" in film and television works.

Introducing dance choreographic thinking into higher film, television, and drama education can not only enrich teaching content and methods, breaking down barriers between artistic disciplines, but also help students transcend the limitations of "language dependence" and learn to construct narratives using diverse elements such as body, space, and rhythm, thereby enhancing the artistic appeal and innovation of their works. However, current teaching practices in this area are still in the exploratory stage, plagued by issues such as poor curriculum integration, monotonous teaching methods, and wide variations in student acceptance. Based on this, this article combines the teaching objectives of higher film, television and drama education with the actual situation of students, and systematically analyzes the introduction path and practical methods of dance choreography thinking, hoping to provide a reference for teaching reform and help film, television and drama education develop in a more comprehensive and innovative direction.

2. The Core Characteristics of Dance Choreographic Thinking and Its Integration with Film, Television, and Drama Education

Dance choreographic thinking is not simply "movement design." Rather, it is a comprehensive creative thinking process that uses the body as a medium, integrating emotional expression, narrative logic, spatial arrangement, and rhythmic control. Its core characteristics are primarily manifested in three aspects: First, "body narrative," emphasizing the use of sequenced body movements to convey information, reveal character relationships, and plot development, rather than relying on verbal language; second, "spatial construction," focusing on utilizing the spatial layout of the stage or within the camera to create atmosphere, suggest character psychology, or promote narrative twists; and third, "rhythmic control," regulating the emotional rhythm of the work through the design of movement speed, intensity, and pauses, enhancing the audience's sense of immersion. These qualities align closely with the educational objectives of higher education in film, television, and drama. From the perspective of film and television drama creation, both stage performance staging and character movement design require the creator to possess the ability to "speak with the body." For example, in dramatic conflict scenes, actors convey emotional outbursts through changes in body tension, while in close-up shots, subtle movement design conveys a character's inner thoughts. This aligns with the "body narrative" of dance choreography. In terms of spatial utilization, set design and actor positioning in film and television drama not only impact the visual quality but are also closely tied to narrative logic. Training in "spatial construction" within dance choreography can help students understand the connection between space and narrative, enabling them to design more coherent and engaging mise-en-scène. Furthermore, emotional expression in film and television drama relies heavily on rhythm—the speed of dialogue, the duration of pauses during performance, and camera transitions all directly impact the audience's emotional response[1]. Training in "rhythmic control" within dance choreography can cultivate students' sensitivity to rhythm and help them learn to coordinate the rhythms of different elements to enhance the emotional expression of a work and create greater depth and impact. This demonstrates the inherent convergence between dance choreography and film and television drama education in the core areas of narrative expression, spatial utilization, and rhythmic control, providing both theoretical and practical foundations for its introduction into teaching.

3. The Practical Needs and Challenges of Introducing Dance Choreography into Higher Film and Television Drama Education

3.1. Practical Needs

Based on industry development and current teaching status, the need for dance choreography in Judging from the development of the industry and the current teaching situation, the introduction of dance choreography thinking into higher film, television and drama education is mainly driven by two demands: on the one hand, the industry's demand for compound talents is becoming more and more urgent. In today's film and television drama works, elements such as dance and physical drama are often added, such as action scene design in film and television, physical expression in emotional scenes, and physical drama and immersive drama in stage dramas. These all require practitioners to have cross-art ideas and skills. However, students taught in traditional teaching models are obviously insufficient in physical expression and multi-dimensional narrative ability, and it is difficult to keep up with industry needs; on the other hand, teaching reforms must break the limitations of tradition. Today's film and television drama education mostly revolves around "language narrative", and students can easily fall into the misunderstanding of "focusing on lines and despising body". As a result, the expression of the works is very simple and there is no visual tension. The introduction of dance choreography thinking can just fill this teaching gap and help students build a multi-dimensional narrative system of "language + body + space", so that the artistic innovation of the works can be improved.

3.2. Challenges

However, when it comes to actual implementation, there will be many problems in integrating dance choreography thinking into teaching: the first is the trouble of connecting the curriculum system. Many higher film and television drama schools do not offer systematic dance courses. To introduce dance choreography thinking, there is a lack of preliminary foundation. If it is added directly to the existing courses, students may not understand it thoroughly and find it difficult to accept; the second is the problem of adapting teaching methods. The training of dance choreography thinking mostly depends on

practical operation, but traditional film and television drama teaching mainly relies on theoretical explanation plus case analysis. The two teaching models are different, and the teaching effect may be discounted in the end; the third is the limitation of teacher quality. Some teachers in the film and television drama major do not have much knowledge and experience related to dance choreography, and they cannot grasp the key points of teaching and cannot effectively guide students to change their thinking; there are also cognitive biases among students. Some students feel that "dance choreography has nothing to do with film and television drama" and are psychologically resistant to this type of training, which will also affect the advancement of teaching[2].

4. Pathways for Introducing Dance Choreographic Thinking in Higher Film, Television, and Drama Education

4.1. Curriculum Integration: Building a "Foundation + Integration" Curriculum System

Curriculum integration is the core path for introducing dance choreographic thinking, and it should be implemented in two steps: First, offering foundational dance courses, such as "Body Training" and "Dance Choreography Foundations," to help students master the basic techniques of physical expression and understand the core logic of dance choreography, laying the foundation for subsequent integration; second, promoting the in-depth integration of dance choreographic thinking with existing courses. For example, in the "Acting Foundations" course, a "Body Narrative Training" module could be added to allow students to express character and emotional changes through physical movement; in the "Stage Miscellany" course, the concept of "Spatial Construction" could be incorporated to guide students in designing more narrative staging schemes using spatial layout; and in the "Film and Television Shot Language" course, the concept of "Rhythm Control" could be integrated to analyze the relationship between shot switching and movement rhythm, enhancing students' expressive abilities.

4.2. Thinking Training: Designing a "Disassembly + Transformation" Training Model

Thinking training should focus on "transforming dance choreographic thinking into film and television drama creation," employing a "disassembly + transformation" model. First, break down the core elements of dance choreographic thinking, such as breaking "body narrative" into "movement symbol design" and "the connection between emotion and movement," and breaking down "spatial construction" into "matching space and narrative" and "creating spatial atmosphere." Through theoretical explanations and case studies, help students understand the connotations of each element. Second, design transformation training tasks, such as having students transform a text narrative into a physical movement sequence, and then transform the physical movement sequence into a stage arrangement or shot design plan. We can achieve the transfer of thinking through the "text-body-film and television drama expression" transformation.

4.3. Faculty Development: Building an Interdisciplinary Teaching Team

Faculty development is crucial for introducing dance choreographic thinking into higher education. This development requires strengthening from two perspectives: First, dance faculty should be invited to participate in the teaching of film, television, and drama programs, offering special lectures or joint courses. For example, dance faculty should present "Rhythm Design in Dance Choreography" and work with film, television, and drama faculty to guide students' practical training. Second, interdisciplinary training should be strengthened for existing film, television, and drama faculty[3]. By selecting faculty to participate in dance choreography-related workshops and conducting interdisciplinary teaching seminars, this will enhance faculty's understanding of dance choreographic thinking and their teaching abilities, thereby fostering an interdisciplinary teaching team with both film, television, and drama expertise.

5. Practical Strategies for the Development of Dance Choreographic Thinking in Higher Film, Television, and Drama Education

5.1. Promoting Practical Training with a Task-Driven Approach

Practical training should be task-oriented, avoiding empty theoretical explanations. For example, in practical courses, students are tasked with "Emotion Visualization Design," where they are asked to design a film or TV drama clip that incorporates body movement, spatial arrangement, and rhythmic

control, centering around core emotions such as "loneliness," "joy," and "conflict." Alternatively, they are tasked with "Scene Narrative Optimization," where students are given a simple scene and are asked to apply the "spatial construction" approach used in dance choreography to redesign the actors' positioning and movements, enhancing the scene's narrative and emotional tension. Upon completion of the task, students will analyze the effectiveness of the dance choreography approach in the design through group discussion and teacher critique, and offer optimization suggestions to enhance students' practical skills.

5.2. Improve the Assessment Mechanism with "Process-Based Evaluation"

The traditional assessment method, which focuses on the "final work," is unable to comprehensively evaluate students' mastery of dance choreographic thinking. Therefore, a "process-based evaluation" mechanism is needed: assessment should be integrated throughout the entire teaching process, encompassing three dimensions: "basic training tasks," "thinking transformation assignments," and "practical plan design." The evaluation content should focus on students' understanding and application of dance choreographic thinking, such as "whether they can accurately use body narrative to express emotions" and "whether they can promote narrative through spatial design." Regarding the evaluation subject, a combination of "teacher evaluation and student peer evaluation" should be adopted. Teachers should focus on professional guidance, while student peer evaluation should emphasize the exchange of ideas. This multifaceted evaluation method stimulates students' learning enthusiasm and comprehensively reflects the teaching effectiveness.

5.3. Expand the Practice Platform through "School-Enterprise Collaboration"

School-enterprise collaboration can provide students with practical opportunities that are more closely aligned with industry needs, helping to implement dance choreographic thinking. Colleges and universities can establish partnerships with film and television companies and theater troupes, inviting industry professionals to participate in teaching and guidance. For example, film and television directors can share their experiences in using physical expression in film and television production, and theater choreographers can share practical examples of dance choreography in stage productions. Furthermore, students can participate in corporate project implementations, allowing them to apply dance choreography in real-world scenarios, improve their problem-solving skills, and seamlessly integrate teaching with industry needs[4].

6. The Value and Impact of Introducing Dance Choreography on Higher Film and Television Drama Education

6.1. Improving Students' Comprehensive Artistic Competencies

In the past, film, television, and drama instruction often focused on "verbal expression," easily limiting students to the lines themselves. Incorporating choreographic thinking can help students broaden their artistic perspectives—not just through dialogue, but also through the use of body language, space, and rhythm to convey ideas. For example, when practicing body language, students can gradually grasp how gestures and postures can convey a character's subtle thoughts. When considering space and rhythm, they can also understand why the closer the actors stand, the more intense the audience feels[5]. This practice not only helps students write and act, but also sharpens their artistic perception and imagination. They can transform from novices with a single skill into creators capable of orchestrating diverse expressions, providing a more solid foundation for future careers as screenwriters, directors, and actors.

6.2. Promoting Innovation in Film, Television, and Drama Teaching Models

Previously, teaching film, television, and drama was often based on a rigid model of "teachers explaining theory and students practicing techniques." The introduction of choreographic thinking has significantly enriched teaching: Classes aren't just about sitting and listening; students are encouraged to stand up and move, such as developing emotional expressions through body language. Specific tasks, like "using spatial arrangement to express conflict between two people," are also given, encouraging students to actively explore these issues. Content is no longer confined to the discipline itself; dance rhythm and spatial concepts are incorporated. For example, when discussing stage arrangement, dance formation design is referenced. Evaluations no longer focus solely on the final work; ongoing practice and shifts in thinking are factored in. This shift not only makes classes more engaging and improves

teaching quality, but also provides practical insights for curriculum reform at other institutions.

6.3. Promoting Innovation and Development in the Film, Television, and Drama Industries

For the film, television, and drama industries to move forward, they rely on individuals with new ideas. By teaching students choreographic thinking in universities, we are injecting fresh blood into the industry—students with cross-disciplinary expertise are able to break away from conventional tropes when creating. For example, when filming a TV series, they consider using precise body movements to make characters more three-dimensional; when staging a stage play, they employ creative spatial arrangement to enhance audience engagement[6]. Gradually, more and more such works are coming out, which can push film and television dramas from "relying solely on stories" to "diversified expressions", which not only meets the audience's expectations for good works, but also drives the entire industry in a more innovative direction.

7. Conclusion

This article focuses on the introduction and implementation of dance choreography in higher education for film, television, and drama. The research first analyzes the core characteristics of dance choreography and its potential relevance to film, television, and drama education. It then identifies the practical needs and challenges of its introduction. Finally, it proposes three pathways for its introduction: curriculum integration, thinking training, and faculty development. Furthermore, it proposes practical strategies: task-driven development, process-based evaluation, and school-enterprise collaboration. The study also explores its impact on education and the industry. The study demonstrates that the introduction of dance choreographic thinking can not only address deficiencies in traditional film, television, and drama education in areas such as physical expression, spatial narrative, and rhythmic control, but also enhance students' overall artistic literacy, promote innovative teaching models, and cultivate more innovative and versatile professionals for the industry.

However, this study still has limitations: as relevant teaching practices are still in the exploratory stage, some strategies (such as the specific proportion of curriculum integration and the difficulty gradient of thinking training) require further adjustment and optimization in subsequent teaching. Furthermore, given the differences in teaching resources and student foundations across institutions, the introduction path and practical strategies need to be tailored to each institution's specific needs. Future research could focus on "differentiated introduction plans for institutions at different levels," "the integration of dance choreographic thinking with film, television, and drama education," and "the integration of dance choreographic thinking with film, television, and drama education. "We will further deepen our research by focusing on areas such as "integration with emerging forms of visual drama" to provide more comprehensive support for the high-quality development of higher education in film, television, and drama.

Based on industry development trends, interdisciplinary integration has become an inevitable trend in arts education. As a highly innovative artistic thinking model, dance choreography will gradually become more valuable in film, television, and drama education. We believe that with the continuous advancement and improvement of teaching practices, dance choreography will become a vital component of higher education in film, television, and drama, playing a greater role in cultivating outstanding talents that meet industry needs and promoting the innovative development of film, television, and drama art.

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