



I'm not stupid, I'm a dancer: applying higher order thinking skills in dance

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Abstract

Critical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking are characteristics of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) (King et al, 1998: 32). Appropriate teaching strategies and learning environments will help the development of HOTS in students (King et al, 1998: 1). A teacher-centred approach will impede the development of HOTS (King et al, 61). This is evident in a typical dance lesson in which a teacher-centred approach (“follow me”) is used as the focus is on the replication of dance movements (Bradley and Szedga, 2006: 249). A child-centred approach will be more exploratory (Bradley and Szedga, 2006: 249) and will encourage the growth of HOTS.

The purpose of this study is to examine the application of HOTS (Bloom, 1956) in dance lessons via the three organisers in dance – performance, choreography and appreciation.

The site of this study is Singapore International School (SIS) in Hong Kong where I taught dance as a subject in the curriculum. At SIS, primary one to four and secondary one to two students (aged six to nine and 12 to 13 respectively) learn dance styles such as Jazz, Ballet, Contemporary dance and Classical Indian dance. Data for this study was elicited from about 120 students who are in primary two and secondary two.

It is hoped that the learning strategies implemented to promote HOTS will create a dynamic learning environment that will enhance and enrich students' learning in dance and creativity.