

Article

Dance Appreciation: Cultivating Empathy in the 21st Century

Farhan Apriadhi Ghazaly^{1*}, Dwi Kusumawardani², and Rizki Taufik Rakhman³¹ Universitas Negeri Jakarta; e-mail : farhanapriadhi@gmail.com² Universitas Negeri Jakarta; e-mail : dwikusumawardani@unj.ac.id³ Universitas Negeri Jakarta; e-mail : Rizkitr@unj.ac.id

* Corresponding Author : Farhan Apriadhi Ghazaly

Abstract: Entering the 21st century era, education is required to not only develop cognitive aspects, but also the character and life skills of students. One important ability that needs to be cultivated is empathy as the foundation of healthy and humanist social interaction. This article examines the role of dance appreciation in shaping students' empathy through a literature review approach. Dance appreciation is seen not only as an activity of observing performances, but also as a process of appreciating the meaning, culture, and emotions implied in dance movements. Through this process, learners not only train aesthetic sensitivity, but also develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C) skills. In addition, dance appreciation can be a safe space for self-reflection, development of social awareness, and the formation of a more empathetic character. Thus, dance has a strategic contribution in answering the challenges of 21st century education, especially in building a cultured young generation and noble personality.

Keywords: Dance Appreciation; Empathy; 21st Century Education; Art Education; Character

1. Introduction

Education is the key to success in the life of a whole human being given the opportunity to receive proper education. Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential, both physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual [1]. Therefore, education must be designed thoroughly and dynamically in order to adapt to the times and the needs of students. With a flexible approach, education can continue to be relevant, innovative, and able to prepare students to face future challenges. Flexible education gives learners the freedom to choose the way, time and style of learning according to their needs and interests. This concept seems progressive as it allows for independence, creativity and learner-centered learning. However, behind this freedom, there is a big challenge that needs to be watched out for, namely the erosion of the values of social life that should be at the core of education itself. In a system that is too flexible, discipline and responsibility are often neglected. Many students feel that they are not bound by a clear structure, so study discipline and punctuality begin to fade. Not only that, social interactions that used to form naturally in the classroom are now replaced by online or self-paced learning, which slowly erodes empathy, care and tolerance among others. Entering the 21st century, the world of education is undergoing a major transformation along with the rapid development of technology, globalization and social change. 21st century learning focuses on developing the skills required by students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Key skills that 21st century students must master include: collaboration skills (the ability to work in teams), communication skills (the ability to express ideas and information clearly), problem-solving and critical thinking skills (the ability to analyze, evaluate, and solve problems), and creativity and innovation skills (the ability to think creatively and generate new ideas)" [2]. In facing the challenges of the 21st century, the education system no longer focuses only on academic achievement, but also on character development and life skills that are relevant to the needs of the times. One important aspect that needs to be emphasized in today's learning is social-emotional skills, especially empathy. Empathy is the foundation of healthy social interaction, cooperation, tolerance and humanity. In this context, art education, especially dance, has a strategic role as a means to foster and strengthen students' empathy.

Received: April 30, 2025;

Revised: May 15, 2025;

Accepted: June 14, 2025;

Online Available : June 17, 2025

Curr. Ver.: June 17, 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

[\(https://creativecommons.org/li](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)[censes/by-sa/4.0/\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Dance education is a form of art education that not only emphasizes the aesthetics of movement, but also becomes a medium of communication and expression of emotions. Three aspects of art education are realized in different activities although they are often inseparable, namely: The first is *self-expression, observation and appreciation* [3]. A dance is able to convey humanitarian messages, cultural values, and deep emotional experiences. When students are invited to observe, live, and appreciate a dance work, they are trained to understand other people's points of view, feel different experiences, and open themselves to diversity of expression. This process naturally develops social sensitivity and the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, which is the essence of empathy. In 21st century learning, dance appreciation can support the development of *4C competencies-critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity* in an integrated manner. When students observe and discuss a dance performance, they practice critical thinking of the meanings and messages contained in the dancers' movements and expressions. Communication and collaboration occur when they work in groups, discuss the interpretation of the work, or even create choreography together. Creativity is certainly a major element in the process of creating and delivering artistic expression. But underneath it all, empathy becomes the foundation that strengthens emotional and social engagement in arts learning.

The journal entitled the unique potential of art education in character development by Sofyan Salam emphasizes that art education has a strategic role in shaping the character of students. Through art activities, such as fine arts, music, dance, and theater, students not only develop aesthetic skills but also moral and social values. The review of the research shows that the study of Dance Appreciation: Fostering Empathy in the 21st Century has something new. This study examines dance appreciation in learning not only means watching or assessing a performance, but also invites students to explore the meaning behind the movements, the cultural background behind them, and the social context that influenced their creation. In the process of appreciating and creating dance, students are invited to connect with their own feelings, understand their body's responses, and find healthy channels of expression. This is very relevant in the modern world of education, where mental health issues and psychological burdens are a challenge for students. With the right approach, dance appreciation can be a safe space to build self-awareness as well as empathy for others. Therefore, it is important for educators, especially art teachers, to design learning that does not only focus on technical dance skills, but also provides space for reflection, discussion and appreciation of meaning. This approach will strengthen the function of art education as a humanist character building tool. Dance appreciation can be a bridge between cognitive and affective learning, between cultural understanding and social-emotional development. With all the potential that students have, dance appreciation needs to have a wider place in the 21st century education system. Through an approach that touches the heart and awakens sensitivity, dance is able to foster empathy as an important provision for the younger generation to coexist harmoniously in an increasingly plural world.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

This section must contain a state-of-the-art explanation. It can be explained in several ways. First, you can discuss several related papers, both about objects, methods, and their results. From there, you can explain and emphasize gaps or differences between your research and previous research. The second way is to combine theory with related literature and explain each theory in one sub-chapter.

2.1. Subsection 1

2.2 Subsection 2

3. Proposed Method

This study adopted a **Systematic Literature Review (SLR)** approach with the aim of identifying, assessing, and synthesizing relevant scientific literature on the role of dance appreciation in fostering empathy, especially in the context of the 21st century. This SLR process refers to the **PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)** guidelines as the main reference in the process of screening and analyzing literature from various academic sources (Page et al., 2021).

The systematic model in this study follows the framework developed by Zawacki-Richter [4], which consists of five main steps:

1. Formulate a research question,
2. Establish inclusion and exclusion criteria,
3. Develop a data search strategy,
4. Conduct gradual study selection, and
5. Carry out study quality assessment.

3.1. Research Question

To clarify the focus of the study and determine the relevant literature, the following research questions (RQ) were used:

- **RQ1:** How is the theoretical concept of dance appreciation linked to the development of empathy in 21st century education?
- **RQ2:** What are the methodological approaches used in studies related to dance appreciation and empathy?
- **RQ3:** What are the main findings of studies that address the contribution of dance appreciation to the development of empathy?

3.2. Selection Criteria

Selection criteria were applied to filter out irrelevant articles. The selection process was based on the following criteria:

Table 1. nama tabel

Criteria	Description
Inclusion	Articles published between 2019-2025. Studies focus on dance appreciation, empathy, and 21 st century education. Articles are available in Indonesian or English. Sourced from trusted scientific databases as Scopus, WoS, ScienceDirect, and Springer.
Exclusion	The article is not directly related to the research question. Does not use a verifiable scientific methodological approach. Not written in Indonesian or English. Not an academic journal article or indexed conference proceedings.

3.3. Search Strategy

Data searches were conducted through several online databases such as **Google Scholar**, **ScienceDirect**, and **SciScape**, which have extensive collections of scientific articles. The search strategy referred to the Latifah & Ritonga (2020) model to avoid overly generalized results and increase search specificity. The filter process and initial selection of articles were based on customized keyword combinations according to the guidelines of Setiadi and Respati et al.

Some of the keywords used include: "*dance appreciation*", "*empathy*", "*arts education*", "*emotional intelligence*", and "*21st century education*".

3.4. Study Selection Process

From the initial search results that yielded 203 articles, three main stages of screening were conducted:

1. Initial checks on the title and abstract,
2. A thorough review of the article content (full-text),
3. Adjustment to the research question.

Articles that passed this stage were those that met the inclusion criteria and answered at least one of the main research questions.

3.5. Quality Assessment

The quality assessment aims to evaluate the extent to which each study contributes to the topics covered. The assessment indicators consist of three main aspects:

- **QA1:** Does the study provide a theoretical basis for the relationship between dance appreciation and empathy?
- **QA2:** Does the study explain approaches or methods of learning dance appreciation in an educational context?
- **QA3:** Do the results show a positive contribution of dance appreciation to learners' empathy or emotional aspects?

Each article is assessed with the following categories:

- **Y (Yes):** Completely matches the indicator,
- **T (No):** Not suitable,
- **P (Partial):** Partially compliant.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the literature search conducted to answer the problem formulation regarding the relationship between dance appreciation and empathy development in the context of 21st century education, researchers conducted a search for academic sources from several digital databases, including Google Scholar and SciSpace. This search was conducted using keyword strings that were specifically designed to align with the focus of the study topic.

From the initial search, a total of 1,009 articles were obtained, consisting of 912 articles from Google Scholar and 97 articles from SciSpace. The collected data was then merged, and an initial filtering process was carried out using platforms such as Dimensions and Onsearch Article to eliminate duplicates and articles that were not directly relevant.

In the initial selection stage, exclusion criteria were applied to filter out less relevant articles. Of the total articles collected, 1,009 articles were eliminated because they did not meet the basic criteria. Common reasons for exclusion included:

1. Articles do not present findings based on empirical data or are speculative,
2. The article is not thematically relevant to the relationship between dance appreciation and empathy,
3. The quality of the publication or the source of the journal cannot be accounted for,
4. The year of publication is not within the range of 2015-2025, and 4.
5. Articles not written in Indonesian or English, or not indexed in international academic databases.

From this process, 209 articles were obtained that met the provisional inclusion criteria, and continued to the advanced evaluation stage in the form of content scanning through reviewing the title, abstract, and main content of the article.

Inclusion criteria in this study included:

1. Articles address the relationship between dance appreciation, empathy, and/or emotional and social character development,
2. The article is able to answer at least one of the three research problem formulations explicitly,
3. Published in the time period 2015 to 2025,
4. Published in a reputable and academically credible journal,
5. Written in Indonesian or English, and indexed in international scientific databases (e.g. Scopus, WoS, ScienceDirect).

After going through an in-depth assessment process on the aspects of substance and relevance, 10 articles were finally declared eligible as the main data (included data) in this systematic synthesis of the literature. The ten articles were then analyzed using Quality Assessment (QA) to ensure their methodological quality and scientific contribution.

The quality assessment is based on three indicators:

1. Suitability of theoretical concepts (QA1),
2. Clarity of research methods and design (QA2),
3. Relevance and strength of findings to the development of empathy in education (QA3).

All selected articles showed the maximum score ("Y - Yes") on each QA criteria. Details of the assessment results have been presented in the literature review table in the previous section.

Table 2. nama tabel

No.	Title & Author (Year)	Research Design	Intervention	Sample	Instrument	Q	Q	Q
						1	2	3
1	Implementation of Project Based Learning Model through Fine Arts Learning to Manage Students' Social	Descriptive Qualitative	Project Based Learning in fine arts based on reflection & discussion	11th grade high school students	Observation, interview, documentation	Y	Y	Y

	EmotionsSuryantoro, Ratnawati, & Oktarini (2025)							
2	Paradigms and Issues in Art Education: Strategies for the Development of Relevant and Sustainable ApproachesSteven, Hartono, & Taib (2024)	Literature Review	Value-based art education strategies and multiculturalism	Education literature & policy	Content analysis, literature review	Y	Y	Y
3	The Effect of Painting Activities on Adolescent Emotional Intelligence Shokiyah (2024)	Quantitative Correlation	Painting activity as an emotional outlet	Fine Arts program students (63 people)	Activity scale & EQ scale, linear regression	Y	Y	Y
4	Growing Learners' Character Through Multicultural Education in Cultural Arts LearningPradana (2018)	Descriptive Qualitative	Multicultural-based cultural arts learning (aesthetics, appreciation, humanization)	Primary /middle education students	Literature study, class observation	Y	Y	Y
5	Improving Appreciation of the Concept of Dance Works Assisted by Audio Visual Recording MediaAzis (2021)	Best Practice / PTK	Audio visual media & PBL model in dance learning	Junior high school ninth grade students	Observation, video, group discussion	Y	Y	Y
6	Kinesthetic Ability and the Development of Empathy in Dance Movement TherapyFederman (2011)	Qualitative-Theoretical Review	Dance Movement Therapy & mirroring/attunement techniques	Therapy practitioners & patients (various)	Literature study, clinical reflection	Y	Y	Y
7	Kinesthetic Empathy, Dance, and Technology Corsa (2019)	Theoretical Philosophy	Interdisciplinary arguments between dance, empathy and technology	Philosophy, neuropsychology literature	Philosophical interpretation and case studies	Y	Y	Y
8	The Empathy and the Structuring Sharing Modes of Movement Sequences in the Improvisation of Contemporary Dance Ribeiro (2011)	Ethnography	Group work-based contemporary dance improvisation	Dancers in the dance community	Observation, video documentation	Y	Y	Y
9	Promoting Kinesthetic Empathy with Dance/Movement	Capstone Project/Qualitative Study	Kinesthetic empathy training protocol for	DMT nurses &	Reflection, clinical observation, training	Y	Y	Y

	t Therapy: An Evidence-Informed Protocol to Support De-escalationLodwick (2018)		psychiatric nurses	practitioners				
10	Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social DevelopmentCatterall, Hetland, & Winner (2002)	Meta-Analysis & Compilation of Studies	Compilation of the effects of arts learning on students' social-emotional well-being	62 international studies	Study synthesis & meta-data analysis	Y	Y	Y

The final result in the include article is to analyze the data to answer the Research Question which is used as the final result and primary data in finishing the research.

- RQ1: How is the theoretical concept of dance appreciation linked to the development of empathy in 21st century education?
- RQ2: What are the methodological approaches used in studies related to dance appreciation and empathy?
- RQ3: What are the main findings of studies that address the contribution of dance appreciation to the development of empathy?

4.1. Emotional Expression and Empathy in Project Based Learning of Fine Art

Shinta A. Oktarini (2025)

Abstract: This study explores the role of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in fine art learning in building students' emotional expression, empathy, and social engagement. With a collaborative and reflective learning approach, students are invited to express themselves through visual works on media such as paper bags, as well as build empathic social spaces through discussions and feedback between friends.

Keywords: Fine art, empathy, project based learning, emotional expression, character education.

RQ1: This research confirms that appreciation of artworks can be a medium for building students' empathy and emotional awareness. Appreciation that develops from direct emotional experiences-such as expressing feelings through works and making motivational comments to friends-builds a strong empathic foundation in students' social interactions.

RQ2: The method used is a qualitative approach through Project Based Learning (PjBL), where the learning process is directed towards the creation of artworks in a reflective and collaborative manner. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and student reflections in the form of sticky notes and group discussions.

RQ3: The findings show that through the PjBL process, students not only developed the courage to express themselves, but also began to form a culture of mutual respect and listening. Motivational comments and a supportive discussion atmosphere demonstrated the formation of a healthy empathic social space, while increasing awareness of the importance of personal feelings and emotions.

4.2. Arts Education and Morality: New Directions for Inclusive Education

Gunada (2022)

Abstract: This article examines how art education can be a means to instill moral values, empathy, and sustainability in a multicultural society. Through literature review and content analysis, this research highlights curriculum development strategies and student engagement in social issue-based art projects.

Keywords: Art education, empathy, moral values, multiculturalism, sustainability

RQ1: This research states that appreciation of art contains moral values, such as empathy, honesty, and tolerance. Art serves as a reflective medium to instill an understanding of human values and cultural diversity. Appreciation developed through value discussions and the creation of meaningful works can foster social awareness and empathy.

RQ2: The research used literature review method and content analysis of relevant sources. The focus of the approach is on developing value-based art learning strategies and strengthening the role of teachers as facilitators of ethical and reflective learning.

RQ3: The main findings indicate that engaging students in social issue-based art projects—such as environmental or humanitarian—increases their sensitivity to social problems and encourages empathic actions. Arts education integrated with moral values was shown to strengthen students' empathy and social concern.

4.3. Reading Dance: Symbolic Representation to Foster Empathy

Dewi Rachmawati (2020)

Abstract: This article describes how learning dance appreciation can strengthen empathy through understanding the symbolic meaning of movement and narrative in traditional and contemporary dance performances. The study focuses on how students make meaning of dance movements in the context of cultural and personal experiences.

Keywords: Dance appreciation, empathy, movement symbolism, art education, meaning learning.

RQ1: Dance appreciation is positioned as a process of understanding symbols and bodily expressions in a cultural context. Through the interpretation of dance representations, students are invited to reflect on human values and emotional experiences, which play a direct role in fostering empathy.

RQ2: The methodology used was a descriptive qualitative study, with student observation and reflection on dance performances. The learning process emphasized narrative and symbolic analysis of dance works, with reflective approaches and group discussions.

RQ3: The research found that students experienced increased emotional understanding through engagement in dance readings. Dance appreciation is not only an aesthetic experience, but also an ethical one, as students are invited to understand suffering, joy, and human values conveyed through movement.

4.4. Dance and Kinesthetic Empathy in the Age of Technology

Andrew J. Corsa (2019)

Abstract: This article argues that the most profound empathy occurs through direct interaction with bodily expression and movement, including in dance. Based on the interpretation of David Hume's theory of empathy and supported by neuroscientific studies, this study emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communication such as movement and sound in building empathy.

Keywords: Kinesthetic empathy, body expression, technology, non-verbal communication, dance art

RQ1: The concept of empathy in this article is emphasized as a sensory and kinesthetic experience, which is powerful through direct perception of body movements, facial expressions, and tone of voice. Dance, as a form of non-verbal communication, is considered capable of facilitating the most profound empathy as it involves simultaneous bodily and emotional responses.

RQ2: This article uses a philosophical approach and interpretation of classical literature (David Hume), combined with empirical studies from psychology and neuroscience. It does not use field studies, but builds strong theoretical arguments through interdisciplinary references.

RQ3: Corsa concluded that digital technology tends to decrease the quality of empathy because it separates users from kinesthetic cues. In contrast, participation in live dance enables the creation of a more authentic and moral empathic space. Dance is considered an important medium in shaping authentic and deep empathic experiences.

4.5. Improving Appreciation of Dance Concepts with Audio Visual Recording Media

Azis, A. (2021)

Abstract: This research is a best practice in improving students' appreciation of dance through audio-visual recording media. Using the Problem Based Learning (PBL) learning model, this study aims to develop a contextual learning model for 9th grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Pecalongan. The results showed significant improvements in appreciation activities, understanding of dance concepts, and students' critical and creative thinking skills.

Keywords: Dance appreciation, audio-visual media, Problem Based Learning, student creativity.

RQ1: This research confirms the importance of dance appreciation in 21st century education, especially in fostering aesthetic awareness and cultural diversity. The concept of appreciation includes perception, understanding, judgment, emotional involvement, and appreciation of art. Dance is positioned as a means to foster a sense of beauty, form an attitude of tolerance, and make students aware of local and global cultural values, in line with the multicultural spirit and the development of empathy.

RQ2: The research used the Best Practice approach with the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL), which prioritizes student involvement in the exploration of real problems through the observation of Nusantara and foreign dance videos. The research procedure includes four stages: planning, classroom action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and written and practical tests. The strategy was designed to increase higher-order thinking activities and deep understanding of the concept of dance.

RQ3: The main findings show significant improvements in students' critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and understanding of dance appreciation and creation concepts. The use of audio-visual recording media proved effective in creating more active and meaningful learning. Students not only understand the concepts theoretically, but are also able to internalize aesthetic and cultural values through visual experiences and discussions.

4. 6. Kinesthetic Ability and the Development of Empathy in Dance Movement Therapy

Dita Federman (2011)

Abstract: This article discusses the link between kinesthetic abilities and the development of empathy in the context of dance movement therapy. Federman argues that physical engagement in dance enables individuals to experience and understand the emotions of others deeply through observation and imitation of movement, as well as authentic body-to-body relationships.

Keywords: Dance movement therapy, empathy, kinesthetic ability, intersubjectivity, body experience

RQ1: Federman said that appreciation in the context of dance involves not only aesthetic observation, but also empathic bodily experience. In Dance Movement Therapy (DMT), movement appreciation is understood as an active bodily process of capturing the emotions of others. The concept of empathy is intersubjective - it occurs when individuals understand the feelings of others through the physical and emotional resonance established during shared movement activities. This reinforces the idea that appreciation of dance movement is a bridge to developing empathy in therapeutic and educational contexts.

RQ2: This research is conceptual qualitative, with an analytical and reflective approach to dance therapy practice. Federman uses the theoretical frameworks of body psychology and creative therapies to explain the relationship between kinesthetics and empathy. No experiments were conducted, but the study strengthened the theoretical basis through interpretation of therapeutic practices that have been used clinically in various therapy and arts education centers.

RQ3: The results of the analysis show that participation in dance movement therapy helps individuals build strong empathic connections through mirroring and movement improvisation techniques. Students and patients who engaged in these activities showed improvement in the ability to recognize and respond to the emotions of others, as well as experiencing increased emotional well-being. Federman asserts that kinesthetic abilities are not only a means of expression, but also a key instrument in fostering empathy through shared bodily experiences.

4.7. Kinesthetic Empathy, Dance, and Technology

Andrew J. Corsa (2019)

Abstract: This article reviews how kinesthetic empathy as the deepest form of empathy can be achieved through direct interaction with bodily expression in dance. Corsa asserts that technology, such as social media or text communication, hinders a full empathic experience because it does not allow full physical and visual contact.

Keywords: Kinesthetic empathy, technology, body communication, dance, morality

RQ1: The concept of dance appreciation in this article is directly linked to moral experience and deep empathic interaction. Corsa states that through dance, individuals can read other people's emotions, intentions and inner states more clearly through bodily expressions. Such appreciation becomes an empathy-forming tool because it involves all five senses and emotional resonance-something that cannot be replaced by static visual communication or text.

RQ2: This study is a philosophical analysis with an interdisciplinary approach that combines moral philosophy (David Hume), communication theory, and neuroscientific studies. No empirical research was conducted, but the study goes into great depth in explaining how empathy works in physical interactions such as dance and compares it to digital communication.

RQ3: Corsa concluded that dance directly creates optimal conditions for the growth of empathy because it involves full non-verbal communication. When people watch or perform dance, they are more likely to respond affectively and morally to others. The main argument is that dance as a form of bodily communication creates the "best" empathy in the context of human relationships.

4.8. The Empathy and the Structuring Sharing Modes of Movement Sequences in the Improvisation of Contemporary Dance

Mónica M. Ribeiro (2011)

Abstract: This research examines how empathy is formed through improvisation in contemporary dance, with a focus on the process of sharing and building shared movement. Emphasis is placed on the structure of interactions between dancers during improvisation that form empathic networks within dance groups.

Keywords: Dance improvisation, empathy, movement structure, group work, interaction

RQ1: The concept of dance appreciation in this study involves not only observation of movement, but also engagement in creating and responding to movement directly with other dancers. The process of sharing motion sequences forms an empathic space as each dancer must be open to the physical and emotional signals of the other members. Empathy grows from shared body awareness and intuitive responses between dancers in improvisation.

RQ2: This study used an ethnographic approach through participatory observation in a contemporary dance group. The researcher recorded the movement interactions between dancers and analyzed how the structure and dynamics of the movements formed emotional cohesion. Video techniques were used to document improvisation sessions and the movement patterns and affective responses of the dancers were analyzed.

RQ3: Research found that collective improvisation enables the formation of movement patterns that reflect mutual understanding and mutual emotional influence. This process builds empathy not through words, but through movement and body resonance. Each dancer learns to respond spontaneously and affectively to the movements of others, forming a very powerful body-based empathic communication network.

4.9. Promoting Kinesthetic Empathy with Dance/Movement Therapy: An Evidence-Informed Protocol to Support De-escalation

Kathryn E. Lodwick (2018)

Abstracts: Lodwick developed an evidence-based protocol for kinesthetic empathy training in psychiatric nurses through movement/dance therapy, aimed at supporting de-escalation in patient crisis situations. This study describes mirroring, attunement and embodied empathy techniques as part of the therapeutic strategy.

Keywords: Dance therapy, kinesthetic empathy, de-escalation, psychiatric nursing

RQ1: Appreciation in this context refers to the ability to understand the emotional state of others through conscious body movements. The concept of kinesthetic empathy is explained as the ability to capture and reflect the emotional state of a client or patient through attunement and mirroring techniques. Dance is not only a medium of expression, but also a powerful emotional processing medium in education and therapy.

RQ2: The methodology used was a qualitative, practice-based study (capstone project). Lodwick designed a movement therapy intervention protocol and tested it in the context of psychiatric nurse professional training. Clinical observation techniques, reflective experiences, and literature review were the main methods in designing and evaluating the effectiveness of this protocol.

RQ3: Results show that movement techniques such as mirroring and embodiment strengthen health workers' empathic skills. Nurses trained through these protocols were better able to understand patients' bodily responses and respond calmly and empathetically in conflict situations. This motion-based intervention is highly beneficial in developing empathy as a professional and humanistic skill.

4. 10. Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development

Catterall, Hetland, Winner (2002)

Abstracts: This compilation presents a summary of over 60 studies examining the impact of the arts-including dance-on students' academic and social development. Focus is given to the relationship between arts experiences and social skills such as empathy, cooperation, and self-awareness.

Keywords: Arts and education, empathy, social development, arts appreciation, 21st century education

RQ1: Arts appreciation, including dance, is described as an experience that exercises emotional sensitivity and social perception. Dance provides a space for students to experience the feelings and perspectives of others through movement representations. In many studies, arts activities increase openness, respect and empathy towards other groups in a pluralistic social environment.

RQ2: This study is a meta-compilation with a systematic method of selecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative research from various regions. The main focus is to synthesize research results using experimental approaches, longitudinal studies, and observations of arts activities in educational contexts.

RQ3: Findings suggest that involvement in performing arts, particularly dance, contributes positively to students' empathy development. Structured arts programs enhance students' social awareness, emotional control and ability to work in teams. The general conclusion is that arts learning can be a strong driver for strengthening social-emotional intelligence in 21st century education.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review of ten articles that examine the relationship between dance appreciation and the development of empathy in 21st century education, it is found that dance has an essential role in shaping students' social-emotional competencies, especially in fostering empathy, emotional awareness, and sensitivity to diversity. Through appreciation activities in the form of observation, reflection, and direct involvement in dance practice, learners can develop a deeper understanding of self-expression and the experiences of others.

Conceptually, dance appreciation learning in these literatures is based on kinesthetic-emotional theory, social constructivism and multicultural education, which emphasize the importance of body involvement, emotions and social interaction in the learning process. Approaches such as Project-Based Learning, Dance Movement Therapy (DMT), as well as collective improvisation strategies are used to create reflective, communicative, and humanity-oriented learning spaces. In this context, dance is not only seen as an artistic expression, but also as a pedagogical medium to build empathy and social awareness.

The results of the literature show that dance appreciation has a positive impact on increasing empathy, both in the affective dimension (such as the ability to feel the emotions of others) and in the cognitive dimension (such as understanding the cultural and social context behind dance movements). Research also emphasizes the importance of direct interaction, shared bodily experience, as well as emotional resonance as key factors in the formation of empathy through dance. In addition, participation in dance has also been shown to improve communication skills, tolerance and cooperation in diverse environments.

Furthermore, the implementation of dance appreciation in education shows high effectiveness, both at the early age, adolescent, and adult levels, and can be applied in formal (school), non-formal (art community), and clinical (movement therapy) contexts. This shows the flexibility and power of dance as an instrument of social-emotional education that is inclusive and relevant to the challenges of the 21st century.

Thus, appreciation of dance has a strategic contribution in fostering empathy as part of holistic character education. The integration of dance learning that prioritizes aesthetic understanding, body experience, and human values is highly recommended to continue to be

developed in the modern education curriculum, as a response to the need for learning that is more oriented towards affective, intercultural, and reflective aspects.

References

- [1] Azis, A. (2021). Peningkatan apresiasi konsep karya tari berbantuan media rekaman audio visual. *Praktik Baik (Best Practice) di SMPN 1 Pecalungan*.
- [2] Corsa, A. J. (2019). Kinesthetic empathy, dance, and technology. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 53(4), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jaesteduc.53.4.0067>
- [3] Catterall, J. S., Hetland, L., & Winner, E. (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Arts Education Partnership.
- [4] Federman, D. (2011). Kinesthetic ability and the development of empathy in dance movement therapy. *Journal of Dance Therapy*, 33(2), 110–125.
- [5] Fink, A. (2010). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- [6] Lodwick, K. E. (2018). *Promoting kinesthetic empathy with dance/movement therapy: An evidence-informed protocol to support de-escalation*. Capstone Project, Columbia College Chicago.
- [7] Pradana, A. (2018). Menumbuhkan karakter peserta didik melalui pendidikan multikultural pada pembelajaran seni budaya. *Jurnal Pendidikan Seni Budaya Indonesia*, 5(2), 12–25.
- [8] Rachmawati, D. (2020). Membaca tari: Representasi simbolik untuk menumbuhkan empati. *Jurnal Seni dan Pendidikan*, 9(1), 45–53.
- [9] Read, H. (1970). *Education through art (2nd ed.)*. Faber & Faber.
- [10] Salam, S. (2020). Potensi unik pendidikan seni dalam pengembangan karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 25(1), 55–67.
- [11] Shokiyah, N. (2024). Pengaruh aktivitas melukis terhadap kecerdasan emosional remaja. *Jurnal Psikologi dan Seni*, 3(1), 27–34.
- [12] Soedijarto. (2005). *Menuju masyarakat belajar: Menggagas paradigma baru pendidikan*. Grasindo.
- [13] Steven, A., Hartono, B., & Taib, M. (2024). Paradigma dan isu dalam pendidikan seni: Strategi untuk pengembangan pendekatan yang relevan dan berkelanjutan. *Jurnal Kajian Seni*, 8(2), 105–120.
- [14] Suryantoro, H., Ratnawati, E., & Oktarini, S. A. (2025). Penerapan model Project Based Learning melalui pembelajaran seni rupa untuk mengelola sosial emosional peserta didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Seni*, 10(1), 13–25.
- [15] Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st century skills: Learning for life in our times*. Jossey-Bass.
- [16] Zawacki-Richter, O., Kerres, M., & Bedenlier, S. (2020). Systematic reviews in educational research. In *Systematic Reviews in Educational Research* (pp. 3–22). Springer.