

Learning beyond conventions: “Body creativities and dances” course at the university in Taiwan

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Educational systems and practice reflect the needs and values of a society, and as Taiwan gets more open and leaves traditional societal constraints, the society is allowed to embrace various values and norms that would not have been previously accepted. The higher education system in Taiwan pays more and more attention to general education courses to complement the main courses students choose so that their minds become more open to world views. At Nanhua University, “Body Creativities and Dances” is one of the general education courses under the frame of Art Education. Creative dance is not usually practiced, and the ability to move freely is not emphasized in the education system in Taiwan. Therefore, the aim of this project is to discuss the outcomes for students who have taken “Body Creativities and Dances.”

Over a period of 12 weeks, the students were taught to increase their body sensitivities, movement vocabularies and ranges, and experience group creative processes. The feedback from the students was positive. For those who had no previous dance experience, to be able to free themselves and move was the first challenge. After they got used to moving freely and creatively, they began to sense their movements and experienced various forms that they initially perceived as strange. This is evidence that creative dance workshops enable participants to not only get in touch with their inner selves and to experience sensations as an important part of global perception, but also perceive things in different ways.

Thus, this project shows that creative dance workshops do encourage students in Taiwan to re-think what types of knowledge are important to learn and how learning can take place. Through this kind of learning experience, we hope to encourage students to try new things and to see from different perspectives in order to broaden their worldviews and respect differences. These are some of the aims that general education in Taiwan wishes to achieve.

Keywords: general education, body creativities, bodily experiences, self-reflection, learning

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