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## **THE CONSTRUCTIVIST**

**METHODOLOGY APPLIED IN THE TEACHING OF MODERN  
AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE**

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### LA METODOLOGÍA CONSTRUCTIVISTA APLICADA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA DANZA MODERNA Y CONTEMPORÁNEA

Gustavo Adolfo Vernaza-Montaño<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [gavernaza@utpl.edu.ec](mailto:gavernaza@utpl.edu.ec)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2254-2057>

Oscar José Martín-Pinto<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [doctoroscar2015@hotmail.com](mailto:doctoroscar2015@hotmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6461-2183>

<sup>1</sup> Unidad Educativa Particular Saint Dominic School.

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#### ABSTRACT

This article addressed the constructivist methodology in contemporary dance training. The objective pursued in this research was to analyze the constructivist teaching method in contemporary dance, for this the qualitative methodology was used for an exhaustive literature review, with the intention of comparing the different methodologies used in contemporary dance training; to reach the conclusions of which is the most appropriate according to the needs of (the learner), for an effective training in contemporary dance through which it was possible to develop and enhance the skills and abilities of the students of contemporary dance. As conclusions and final results, the apprentice was trained with analytical and reflective criteria and with the ability to self-evaluate for a permanent construction of significant knowledge in contemporary dance.

#### Keywords:

Contemporary dance, dance students, training, skills, abilities, constructivist methodology.

#### RESUMEN

En este artículo se abordó la metodología constructivista en la formación en danza contemporánea. El objetivo que se persiguió en esta investigación, fue analizar el método de enseñanza constructivista en la danza contemporánea, para esto se utilizó la metodología cualitativa para una revisión bibliográfica exhaustiva, con la intención de comparar las distintas metodologías empleadas en la formación en danza contemporánea; para llegar a las conclusiones de cuál es la más apropiada de acuerdo a las necesidades del estudiante, para una efectiva formación en danza contemporánea por medio de la cual se logró desarrollar y potenciar las habilidades y destrezas de las y los estudiantes de danza contemporánea. Como conclusiones y resultados finales el estudiante se formó con criterio analítico, reflexivo y con la capacidad de autoevaluarse para una construcción permanente de conocimientos significativos en danza contemporánea.

#### Palabras clave:

Danza contemporánea, estudiantes de danza, formación, habilidades, destrezas, metodología constructivista.

## INTRODUCTION

To speak of dance is to speak of a broad scope of action, is to speak of the universe itself and its perfect synchrony, for many scholars dance can be approached from a philosophical, spiritual, physical, academic, etc. perspective, therefore, to give a single definition of dance is an impossible task, because the dance is closely linked to what we are as sentient-thinking beings, the evolution of the culture of peoples and even find the dance in its most primitive in nature and in the sinuosity of the lines that cross and connect the space-time.

It is also a complex task to talk about contemporary dance, which should be approached with a sense of humility because the speed at which events occur today makes defining this dance technique, it becomes a titanic task, we recognize that contemporary dance encompasses a myriad of elements and that at the discretion of each creator their dance is contemporary, beyond the eye and taste of the consumer is not very well understood what we mean by contemporary dance (Almahano, 2011).

The treatment of dance as a curricular activity in education, assumes not losing the essence of it; the methodological foundations should be based on a pedagogical model that should handle two dimensions: the Dance and the didactic components of the specialty. This model must be based on philosophical, sociological, pedagogical and biopsychosocial foundations of the artist; in order to achieve significant learning for training and development of Dance, therefore, the methodological approach should focus on learning from the person, the bodies, the I-body and its energy, giving importance to dance as a means that leads the artist to discover how to learn better and what he learns (Gómez, 2012).

The problem found throughout this research is the need to decolonize dance, because the canons to which the creators and apprentices of modern and contemporary dance are exposed come from the importation of styles and Eurocentric culture. Therefore, in the locality is born the need to reconnect with its own, to achieve the birth of a methodology that adapts to the needs of Ecuadorian and mestizo bodies (Mora, 2015). As an objective of this research, the management of learning in Dance has as fundamental pillars the organization of the components of didactics, a problematic situation, curricular objectives, learning contents, teaching and learning methods, class organization, and material and human resources for teaching and evaluation.

## DEVELOPMENT

It is imperative to mention that the definition of contemporary dance is very subjective, as each creator has its own definition and scope on this technique, however, something that most agree on is the versatility of contemporary dance and its inherent evolution. Contemporary dance

allows creators and co-creators to work from a horizontal perspective, because in most cases this is precisely what enriches and allows this fascinating technique to evolve; contemporary dance fuses styles, elements, theatre, voice and its only limit is the imagination of the creators and co-creators.

It is almost impossible when talking about modern and contemporary dance, not to mention the main and most recognized precursors, such as: Isidora Duncan, Marta Graham, José Limón, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Aylin, Pina Bausch, that when speaking of a few in the world sphere in the case of the local ones the list starts with Wilson Pico, Klever Viera, Osmara de León (Carmen Estrella Villamana Breto), María Luisa Gonzales, Susana Reyes and a long list of artists more; here the discussion remains open on whether they really were and are, contemporary or modern and it is likely that the discussion will continue. For many authors what makes the difference between contemporary dance and modern dance is the methodology used at the time of teaching, since the latter does not move away from what is academic dance having the taxation as its main axis, while contemporary dance also called gestural dance although it uses a variety of methodologies seeks to build new stories or rethink the existing ones.

The aforementioned does not mean that contemporary dance lacks rigor and fiscality, but it adapts to the needs and conditions of the performers, using methods or creating them in the process so that the result is significant, this means that in contemporary dance there is no mild in which the individual must fit but rather, the technique is flexible and adapts to their learning needs.

Each of the masters mentioned above, approached contemporary or modern dance from a subjective perception, but with a common trunk which is the possibility of freedom in modern and contemporary dance, that is, the ability of the artist to enrich his art not with what he is told but with what he is in essence, each and every one of these iconic artists has gone down in history with famous phrases such as: "Dancers are messengers of the Gods" (Martha Graham n/d). "I am not interested in how the human being (dancer) moves, but in what moves him" (Pina Bausch n/d). "I believe that we are never so sincere and human, as when we dance" (José Limón n/d), etc. This is proof of how important is in dance not to limit the student's creativity and to motivate him/her to build meaningful learning from his/her own abilities, skills and reality.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study conducted in this research is qualitative according to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014), this research method consists of the ability to understand the way in which the student acquires knowledge from their own reality re-signifying what they have learned and comparing it with their environment holistically, understanding the

phenomenon and deconstructing it in order to adapt it from their ethnic-cultural, economic-social, historical-political, etc. perspective.

The methodology applied in this research is the literature review as mentioned, Coral (2016), this methodology requires a thorough analysis of documentary material on a particular topic, in this case the Modern and Contemporary Dance, starting from the own point of view, organize the information that will support the research, determine the objective, that is, the researcher must consider both the order and the purpose of the material to be reviewed and serve as a source of his research. The bibliographic material consulted focuses on the constructivist methodology in modern and contemporary dance and in turn the contrast that exists between traditional models and the constructivist model.

The scenarios of this research are the spaces of creation and co-creation in the city of Quito, such as: theatre's, dance laboratories, independent centres, public and private companies, faculties, conservatories, etc., where different teaching and learning methodologies are applied. The creators, co-creators and performers are the research universe and the apprentices will be the population. The technical tools used to obtain the information were Categorization: Triangulation and Grounded Theory and Participant Observation.

From the Categorization: Triangulation and Grounded Theory, the constructivist approach applied to dance according to Ferreira (2018), defends that dance is used as a means to comprehensively educate students in dance to learn to use skills, procedures and concepts that are going to allow generating new knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes that allow the development of creativity that are associated with the above mentioned in a constant search for evolution in dance. All activities proposed in the teaching of dance are aimed at the objective of learning to learn, this is done through bodily experiences and reflective processes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basically, it can be said that the constructivist model keeps the dance student in their cognitive, social and affective aspects in a construction of their own that is produced and increased as a result of interactions between knowledge and their reality, these constructions are made with the schemes that the dance student already has and with those built in their relationship with the environment around them (Hugas, 2016).

This will allow the development of individual potentialities, improved the discipline in general and the quality of the dance works, it is essential to give them the freedom to dance learners to have their own opinions and artistic proposals in dance, but with the supervision and under the guidance of the teacher/choreographer, especially in

the evaluation activities of the dance works (Santamaría, 2015).

The feedback of the dance works presented by these apprentices is important for the teaching-learning processes in the constructivist model, as it involves the cognitive, affective, social and psychomotor domains; listening and hearing the opinions and experiences of the other actors involved, this motivates to recompose one's own experiences and reformulate ideas or propose new ones (Santamaría, 2015). It is important to add that Constructivism allows dance learners to build their own knowledge in a social environment, where the coexistence of all those involved is fundamental to the production of knowledge about art and especially the creation of dance and its styles.

When speaking about methodological approaches in dance, we must refer to the teaching-learning processes, the concept of learning in dance as a process adaptable to a medium of universal culture. It is intended that in dance students learn to use the skills, procedures and concepts of the discipline; generate skills, habits and attitudes to meet the learning that should be for the professional development of the discipline. Dance is movement, and as such the human being must integrate in its totality, in a unique, unrepeatable and historical way the direct relationship of growth of processes and learning that will allow transiting to the requested dance styles (Soubal, 2018).

For Arteaga et al. (2016), to educate or instruct through dance, is not only to transmit knowledge and behaviours considered merely behavioural, we must imagine a psycho-social situation that encourages dance learners to discover knowledge that led to a change in the meaning of their experience and then create and provoke behaviours in themselves to be integrated into a genuine and true work. Educating in Dance will be considered then, in processes that germinate in an integral creativity with the permanent concern to evolve, for constructivist learning to occur there must be instances that relate the interactions and situations with the different actors of the educational process.

For these interactions to turn out to be positive in the process, the actors involved must consider the pedagogical principles of Constructivism to create the fundamental possibilities of appropriation, which are different and individual. These interactions become principles, because with the educational action and decisions of the agents involved detect the training needs and previous knowledge that has dance students, we must also mention the dimensions of behaviours and teaching strategies or styles that will use these agents that everyone can learn to learn, achieving achieve own learning styles and predisposition to adopt strategies for learning in dance (Hugas, 2016).

In dance as any discipline breaks and assembles new concepts of dance body expression according to the

needs of the performer and the audience that is contemplating the dance work. In dance, reality is constructed by dance students in an active state, full of their own reflections and logical process, where there is a dissatisfaction, an imbalance between attitude and cognition that constantly contradicts, so the Constructivism calls it dissonance or cognitive crisis, in this case the dance student influenced by his discipline and by the active members of society, provide him with the goals and methodology for achieving them and is based on three important aspects: the connection of language and thought, the zone of proximal development and the formation of concepts (Klinger & Vadillo, 2017).

Zimmerman (2015), suggests that dance students should be directed to take control of their own actions within learning, this will allow a very important factor in education: self-regulation, a necessary process that provides them with the opportunities and learning strategies for the autonomous acquisition of knowledge and dance skills. Self-regulated learning environments are those that invite the student to take an active role. The teacher/choreographer in his artistic work has to make the dance student aware of creating and developing strategic thinking and directing it towards the goals of dance. For this, the actors involved in the dance teaching-learning process must follow a series of phases such as: planning, self-observation, control and evaluation (Torrado, 2014).

From this perspective, criticism and reflection go beyond what is taught and how it is taught; which are the didactics used that develop openings to constructivist thinking of dance students, this invites them to build new ways of thinking and self-criticism to form and change paradigms. It is necessary that students in dance develop their own style of thinking to increase their dance skills, the teacher as a representative of the construction and transmission of knowledge, must have developed them effectively and this is how the competencies related to dance education and the body were developed (Giroux, 2015).

As an elementary part of the teaching-learning process, evaluation ***“as a collection of information in order to be able to interpret it, assess it and make decisions that reverse changes and improve in teaching”*** (Fernández, 2012). In the context of dance pedagogy, evaluating implies a permanent attitude of reviewing the practices carried out and providing feedback on the teaching-teaching-educational process, which is the performance of the teacher and the learning of dance students.

And from the Participant Observation, the evaluative experiences of teaching-learning in dance, it is not only about measuring or grading in a given evaluation, since in this area the process has a qualitative cut. This requires teaching-learning strategies and qualitative evaluation that show a more proper reality to achieve continuous feedback of all factors involved in the learning process of

dance, this includes a formative process and thus interact teaching practices towards a real human development.

The evaluation of students in dance, should be a systematic activity that always considers the individual differences of dance students, the possibilities of these and their own learning rates, so you should use a varied methodology of evaluation with different techniques and tools that relate previous learning experiences and those lived at the time of learning of dance students, evaluation devoid of knowledge, emotion and context, makes no sense, so the evaluation as a final objective, has the obligation to help dance students grow, develop and feel full (Delgado, 2015).

The results obtained in this work consists from the literature review of the thesis presented and developed, part of how constructivist education is used in the teaching of modern and contemporary dance and how the student of this discipline build their own concepts of it, this is a great help to build and learn the theoretical body that exists around the dance, As a first result has been found that contemporary dance is increasingly immersed in education, seeking the creation of curricula that consistently follow the constructivist methodology in constant evolution and that pedagogy is responsible for the scientific study for a teaching-learning appropriate to the constructivist methodology.

Another of the results shown, is the little deepening of the cognitive processes that make contemporary dance dancers as a basis for meaningful learning and professional development in this area, these processes are memory, perception, executive processes ... try to extrapolate them to the field of contemporary dance would have a positive impact on the learning of it, with this has come to the assessment of the relationship between the physical and psychological, both related and that their aspects cannot be forgotten for a correct teaching-learning processes of contemporary dance.

With the aforementioned, adjustments must be made in the practice of teaching-learning of modern and contemporary dance, in this process a reflective process of practice must be carried out so that all the agents involved can unite in this reflective practice the cognitive and physical processes mentioned in the previous paragraph. These reflections and their respective evaluations and for future research, being able to work in their compression both fields will allow an adequate teaching-learning process and therefore, the results that could show an improvement in the acquisition of physical and psychological skills acquired in modern and contemporary dance.

## CONCLUSIONS

The knowledge of the different social, educational and artistic agents of each of the areas involved in the teaching of dance in its different contexts, where the tools are



provided for the combination of the same; concretizing in different choreographic projects based on contemporary dance. For this, there is a concrete and singular didactic, where each participant interacts in a different way in the results so it must be studied and evaluated for the implementation of the teaching of contemporary dance in question.

In no case, the idea that part of the body as an instrument of dance is given in advance, but on the contrary, are shared elements, dance and body, with a perspective of dance, which is the most important for the analysis and what is different from the dance is the fact of how it is constructed as an art object. The body of the contemporary dancer is born as a concept that supports the movement, it is malleable, an internal communication that supports an ideal of human movement as something expressive, so the constructivist approach and its methodologies will give the student of contemporary dance the necessary cognitive tools for criticism, analysis, and development of the concept of contemporary dance from the very construction of the idea and from the needs presented by the student of contemporary dance and the context that surrounds it.

In short, contemporary dance and especially dance education, favours cognitive culture allowing the development of imagination, an aesthetic vision of the world, the description of the sensitive in the artist. It is thought that the artistic domains cannot be ignored in the academic institutions of dance, because the artistic productions in dance have increased in a historical-cultural legacy from which adaptable content can be extracted with an educational objective in the teaching-learning of dance. It is a look that grants a point of view which carries a sensibility on the body in general, allows to explore the power of the singular productions and to give place to the imagination.

For future research in relation to this topic, it is advisable to make contributions on the use of constructivist methodology in the conception and teaching-learning of modern and contemporary dance to break the old paradigms of dance construction and give more prominence to learners of modern and contemporary dance, future research should be oriented to the creation of teaching-learning models with constructivist basis, where artistic creations are a constructive result of learning with its own context, so it is recommended that future research be oriented to the teaching-learning processes, to the didactics of the same and evaluative and evolutionary process in which the self-construction of modern and contemporary dance can be demonstrated.

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