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Enhancing Dance Curricula in Hebei Vocational Art College Via the Four-Component Instructional Design

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Abstract

This study explores the application of the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model in the context of dance performance curriculum development and improvement in Hebei Vocational Art College (HVAC). The researchers employ a case study methodology to explore the intricate dynamics of pedagogical design in dance performance programs, situated within the context of dance as an educational practice. To understand how the 4C/ID model could be effectively applied to the dance performance curriculum, we employed a range of qualitative data collection methods. Data was collected through in-depth interview, focus group interview and participant observation activities. The analysis reveal that the introduction of the 4C/ID instructional design method facilitates the restructuring of dance curricula to align more closely with the demands of professional roles in the dance industry. It systematizes the intuitive teaching experiences of dance educators, transforming them into long-term, sustainable curriculum resources. Moreover, the study enhances the educational logic and coherence of dance programs, providing effective strategies and a valuable reference for the improvement of vocational dance curricula. In conclusion, by integrating the 4C/ID model, this research highlights its potential to address the unique challenges of dance education and to bridge the gap between teaching practices and professional competencies in vocational contexts.

Keywords: Dance Curriculum, Four Component Instructional Design, Course Development, Vocational Dance Education

Introduction

Hebei Vocational Art College (HVAC) is a higher vocational institution specializing in arts education. It offers programs across seven major artistic disciplines: dance, music, Peking opera, film and television performance, art design, fine arts, and fashion performance, along with a variety of related subjects and supporting courses. Currently, there are 29 similar vocational arts colleges in China (Deng & Jin, 2020). Over the past five years, HVACs has

achieved significant development, exerting a notable influence in the field of vocational dance education.

The dance performance major at HVAC underwent a comprehensive restructuring and redevelopment of its dance courses starting in 2020, guided by the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model introduced by Jeroen van Merriënboer in 1997 (Jin, 2022). In 2022, Choreography for Children and Performance of Dance Theater Roles courses were awarded National Excellence Course among 29 arts-focused vocational colleges in China (Hao, 2023). Furthermore, according to the 2024 Golden Apple Rankings of China's vocational colleges, the dance performance program at HVAC was ranked first nationwide (Golden Apple Ranking, 2024). These achievements have garnered significant attention from peer vocational arts institutions in China towards HVAC. Hence, colleges such as Anhui Vocational College of Art (April, 23, 2024), Yunnan Vocational College of Art (May 16, 2024), Hainan Vocational College of Art (March 25, 2024), and Sichuan Vocational College of Art (May, 6 2023) have visited HVAC for idea exchanges and learning dance performance major curriculum. Based on this background, this case study limits the focus merely on HVAC's "Collective Dance Performance" (CDP) dance curriculum. CDP is one of the courses under the dance performance major courses in HAVC.

The motivation for this study arises from the increasing need to bridge the gap between traditional dance education and the evolving demands of the professional dance industry. In many vocational dance programs, curricula often lack the systematic structure necessary to prepare students for the complexities of professional roles. This misalignment results in graduates who, despite possessing technical skills, struggle to integrate them into real-world performance settings (Yin, 2024). Existing teaching methods often prioritize short-term performance outcomes, such as mastering isolated dance techniques or performing predefined choreographic sequences for a single role, rather than focusing on long-term professional development goals. These broader objectives include the ability to adapt to diverse stage settings or site-specific performances, choreographing dance based on performance tasks, and effectively managing stage presence. As a result, knowledge acquisition becomes fragmented and misaligned with industry expectations, ultimately limiting students' preparedness for real-world professional demands.

Furthermore, a key challenge in vocational dance education is the over-reliance on individual teachers' personal experiences in curriculum design. While this approach is valuable for preserving artistic traditions, it often results in inconsistent course content, making it difficult to establish a structured and progressive skill development framework (Huang, 2024). Compared to disciplines such as language studies and computer science, where structured and evidence-based frameworks are widely adopted, arts education in vocational colleges—particularly dance—has lagged behind in implementing systematic instructional design models (Meltzer & Schwencke, 2020). As a result, there is an urgent need for curriculum development strategies that provide a coherent, structured, and research-based framework to support students' professional growth (Zhang, 2019).

To achieve these objectives, this study investigates the "Collective Dance Performance" (CDP) course at Hebei Vocational Art College (HVAC) as a case study. It aims to answer two key questions: I) How can the 4C/ID model be applied to curriculum development in vocational

dance education to ensure the content is systematic, coherent, and well-structured? II) How can curriculum development align closely with industry requirements, thereby serving as a bridge between the domain of professional activities and the realm of learning activities? By addressing these questions, this research provides a structured framework for optimizing dance education and ensuring its relevance to professional practice.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to address the persistent challenges faced by vocational dance education, particularly in aligning curricula with the rapidly evolving demands of the dance industry. By applying the 4C/ID model, this study not only enhances the educational logic and coherence of dance programs but also provides a replicable framework for other vocational arts institutions. The 4C/ID model's focus on authentic learning tasks ensures that students engage in real-world scenarios that mirror professional practice, while supportive information provides the theoretical and conceptual knowledge necessary for creative problem-solving. Additionally, procedural information and part-task practice allow for the mastery of both technical and creative skills, ensuring a holistic approach to dance education. By aligning dance education with industry expectations, this study not only improves pedagogical effectiveness but also establishes a scalable framework for future research and curriculum innovation in vocational arts education.

Literature Review

Implications of the 4C/ID Model Application Study for Vocational Dance Education

The Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model, introduced by Jeroen van Merriënboer, has become a widely recognized framework in instructional design, particularly in European vocational education. Wasson & Kirschner (2020) emphasize that the 4C/ID model breaks away from traditional teaching designs centered on single lessons, advocating for a more holistic approach. It takes into account the interactions between different phases of the teaching design process and offers detailed operational steps for implementing effective learning. This shift towards a more integrated, task-centered approach has significant implications for vocational education, where complex skills need to be taught in a coherent and systematic manner.

In contrast to its widespread use in Europe, research on the application of the 4C/ID model in China's vocational education system has been relatively recent, with a noticeable increase in interest but limited systematic case studies (Xu et al., 2023). Specifically, in the field of vocational arts education, the application of the 4C/ID model only began in earnest around 2020, with the field of dance education lagging behind. A notable example of this emerging trend is the application of the model in the development of dance performance courses at Hebei Vocational Art College (HVAC), which has been pioneering in integrating this instructional design model into its curriculum (Yang & Liu, 2022).

Vocational dance education faces unique challenges that differ from those in undergraduate institutions like the Beijing Dance Academy, which focus on professional training for elite dancers. In vocational colleges, where students often come from non-specialized backgrounds with little formal dance training, there is a need to design curricula that are more practical and aligned with industry requirements (Jin, 2022). The student population at vocational institutions typically consists of those with general high school backgrounds, which makes it necessary to adopt a teaching model that bridges the gap between their existing

skills and the professional competencies required in the dance industry. The 4C/ID model offers an ideal approach by structuring the curriculum to systematically integrate technical skills, emotional expression, and spatial awareness, ensuring that students are equipped with comprehensive, job-ready skills.

Additionally, much of the existing research on vocational dance education is rooted in early childhood education or general dance courses, rather than the specialized training required for vocational dance performance. These two areas of study differ fundamentally in their teaching objectives and target outcomes, as early childhood dance education focuses on preparing future educators for teaching young children, while vocational dance programs aim to train students to perform professionally in the cultural and tourism entertainment sectors (Deng, 2022; Liu, 2022). Therefore, much of the research on dance education, particularly in the context of vocational training, does not directly apply to dance performance programs. This makes the application of the 4C/ID model in vocational dance education, especially at HVAC, a crucial and novel area of study.

Given the nascent stage of 4C/ID model implementation in Chinese vocational dance programs, particularly in the context of HVAC's dance performance curriculum, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature. It explores the model's potential and practical value in addressing the current challenges in vocational dance education, while offering insights into how the systematic, learner-centered framework of 4C/ID can be applied to the unique needs of vocational dance programs in China. This review of recent trends underscores the need for vocational dance education to evolve in alignment with both the demands of the industry and the educational needs of students with diverse backgrounds. By integrating the 4C/ID model, this study contributes to the growing body of research exploring the intersection of instructional design and vocational dance training, offering an innovative approach to curriculum development in the field.

Context and Challenges in Vocational Dance Education

According to Li (2024), dance is an art form that demands exceptionally high levels of physical technical skill, yet its presentation is inherently diverse and complex. As a comprehensive performing art, it externally integrates elements such as stage design, lighting, music, narrative, costumes, and styling, while internally combining physical techniques, emotional expression, and character portrayal into a cohesive whole. Therefore, dance education cannot simply treat dance as a set of isolated technical skills or reduce it to segmented physical training. Instead, it must draw upon and integrate the multifaceted knowledge embedded within dance practice. This includes not only technical and artistic aspects but also broader influences such as cultural literacy, a spirit of innovation, and the cultivation of a healthy personality (Liu, 2021).

A holistic approach to dance education is essential for fostering well-rounded dancers capable of meaningful and impact artistic expression. Particularly In the context of vocational education, teaching objectives must align closely with professional development goals, and dance curriculum content should correspond directly to the competencies required for stage performance roles (Mo, 2019). This type of curriculum carries the dual attributes of vocational relevance and higher education standards. It must maintain its vocational orientation, achieve higher-level academic rigor, and emphasize integrative capabilities (Zulaikha et al., 2021).

To achieve this, it is essential to combine the comprehensive competencies demanded by real job roles with the learning patterns of students. These competencies should then be translated into corresponding courses, forming effective teaching methods and content. This approach not only ensures the fulfillment of learning objectives but also fosters the potential for students' professional development (Zhao, 2024). By doing so, vocational dance education can effectively bridge the gap between educational practices and industry requirements, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary for long-term success.

Complex work tasks often require the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes into cohesive competencies, enabling learners to achieve a series of comprehensive learning objectives. These integrated competencies are essential for performing authentic work tasks, rather than fragmenting complex tasks into seemingly scientific but disconnected and piecemeal learning goals focused on declarative, stacked knowledge. Instruction should, therefore, prioritize the development of an interconnected knowledge base, allowing students to activate and apply diverse types of knowledge when encountering new or unfamiliar tasks (van Merriënboer et al., 2002). This holistic approach ensures that learning is both meaningful and transferable to real-world contexts.

As Lim et al., (2009) argue, unit-based instructional methods often limit students to learning only a narrow set of skills at any given time, offering little opportunity to practice how to coordinate these discrete elements into a coherent whole when tackling professional tasks. This challenge is particularly evident in dance education. Just as the most common comment choreographers make about new graduates entering the workforce is that these students only have scattered skills in the physical aspects of the body, but lack the ability to express themselves in dance in a holistic way with spatial perception, emotional expression, musical melody, and the ability to think about the body and understand why they are dancing.

In other words, freshly graduated and entering dance industry are not directly qualified to perform on stage in a short period of time. During their time at university, students acquire a variety of dance skills and knowledge through multiple courses, much like collecting exquisite yet scattered pearls. However, without a connecting thread to string them together, these individual skills remain isolated and cannot form a cohesive whole - a complete pearl necklace. If properly integrated during their education, these skills could be transformed into a unified competency, enabling graduates to seamlessly transition into the market and immediately create professional and commercial value without requiring additional refinement or training. This underscores the importance of holistic and integrative educational approaches in preparing students for real-world demands.

Theoretical Foundations and Application of the 4C/ID Model

Sheng & Ma (2010) and Hu (2023) stated that the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model, introduced by Jeroen van Merriënboer in 1997, represents a groundbreaking approach to instructional design. At its core, the model emphasizes a task-centered learning approach, aiming to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes through task completion to facilitate learning transfer. In his 2017 publication, Ten Steps to Complex Learning, Merriënboer further refined the model into a systematic pathway for instructional design, providing a structured solution to the challenges of teaching complex skills (Merriënboer & Kirschner, 2017). Grounded in cognitive psychology, the 4C/ID model emphasizes the careful

calibration of cognitive load to keep learners within their zone of proximal development, thereby enhancing the learning experience (Güney, 2019).

This model is widely recognized within the international training and educational technology community as one of the most competitive instructional design theories. It holds significant practical value for improving instructional efficiency, addressing the demands of complex learning, and enabling effective learning transfer, making it a powerful tool for advancing educational practices (Husnin, 2017). Costa et al., (2022) conducted a meta-analysis on the impact and application of the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model over the past two decades across various academic fields and technical training contexts. Their study revealed that educational programs developed using the 4C/ID model have a significant positive effect on performance outcomes. Furthermore, they recommended that the use of the 4C/ID model should be prioritized as an instructional model in college and university learning environments.

The 4C/ID model is designed precisely to address such educational needs by focusing on whole-task learning and flexibly integrating fragmented knowledge and skills. It incorporates the coordination and synthesis of local knowledge and abilities within the context of workplace scenarios, demonstrating the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Merriënboer et al., 2002). From a practical perspective, the model encourages learners to abstract mental constructs from concrete experiences, fostering an active process of schema reconstruction that aligns closely with real-world contexts. This inductive approach is central to the 4C/ID model's effectiveness in designing instruction for tasks characterized by complex learning requirements (Sheng & Ma, 2010). By aligning fragmented learning components into a cohesive structure, the model not only facilitates deeper understanding but also prepares learners to apply their knowledge and skills seamlessly in professional settings.

Merriënboer and Kester (2005) outlined the foundational structure of the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model, which comprises four core components: learning tasks, supportive information, procedural information, and part-task practice. Learning tasks serve as the central element of instruction, encompassing examples to be studied, problems to be solved, and projects to be completed, allowing learners to integrate knowledge and skills through practical application. Supportive information provides the conceptual and theoretical background necessary for learners to approach problems creatively and effectively. Procedural information offers step-by-step guidance to facilitate learners' ability to perform routine aspects of tasks accurately. Finally, part-task practice focuses on repetitive exercises of specific sub-tasks with clear solutions, aiming to achieve automation and mastery of foundational skills (Yang & Liu, 2022). These components collectively form a systematic instructional design framework that promotes both immediate task performance and long-term skill development. The principles of the model have been widely applied in vocational education, facilitating significant advancements in instructional design for educators and learning strategies for students (Güney, 2019). Notably, the model has made substantial contributions to knowledge transfer and effective teaching in disciplines characterized by the diversity and complexity of technical skills.

While the 4C/ID model has demonstrated adaptability and efficacy across diverse disciplines, its application in vocational arts education remains under-explored. This study represents the first attempt to apply the model to a dance performance curriculum, specifically the "Collective Dance Performance" course, addressing a significant research gap. However, several limitations should be noted. The study focuses on a single course within one institution, limiting the generalization of its findings. It does not assess the long-term impact on student outcomes or professional performance, nor does it explore broader implementation challenges such as resource demands and teacher training. Despite these limitations, this research lays a foundation for further exploration of the 4C/ID model's potential in bridging educational practices and professional competencies in vocational arts education.

Methodology

Case Study

This paper employs a case study methodology to explore the intricate dynamics of pedagogical design in dance performance programs, situated within the context of dance as an educational practice. According to Gerring (2007), the case study was the first method of social science. France's Frederic Le Play is given credit for the introduction of this method during the 1800's. Although LePlay primarily researched items in the financial realm, case studies are used in a wide range of fields. "Case studies are a standard method of empirical study in various 'soft sciences' such as sociology, medicine, and psychology" (Kitchenham et al., 1995). Sclafani (2017) stated that those who select to perform case studies will have a wide array of data collection modalities that could be potentially utilized. There are no strict limitations upon exactly how these studies must be done, but rather the user is offered a looser framework that honors diverse forms of data beyond simple field notes.

Case study research is also one of the most commonly used qualitative research methods in educational studies (Yazan, 2015). As early as 1974, Walker (1974) defined case study as a qualitative research method capable of deeply exploring complex phenomena in real-life contexts. Lewin & Somekh (2011) stated that case study research is uniquely suited to engaging with and reporting on educational activities. It allows for an in-depth focus on a specific instance, utilizing a variety of methods and data sources to explore and critically examine it. With this, Ridder (2017) defines case study as an empirical research method, emphasizing its ability to explore, describe, and interpret the subject of investigation. These perspectives provide a solid theoretical foundation for the adoption of the case study approach in this research. Case study focuses on what Robert Stake (2013) describes as a "functioning specific" or a "bounded system," where the unit of study is clearly defined and self-contained. According to Heale and Twycross (2018), the case study method is particularly valuable for narrowing down complex and broad topics or phenomena into manageable research questions.

In line with this methodology, the present case study analyzes the application of the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model in curriculum development for vocational dance education. According to Yin (2003) statement that when the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions, you should use a case study approach. Through qualitative data analysis, this study systematically describes and examines how the 4C/ID model supports the development of the CDP course and what key strategies employed in the

process. The aim is to demonstrate the model's potential and practical value in addressing the challenges of curriculum design in vocational dance education, while offering valuable insights for broader applications in similar educational contexts.

Data Collection

To thoroughly understand how the 4C/ID model could be effectively applied to the dance performance curriculum, we employed a range of qualitative data collection methods. The primary focus was placed on the CDP course within the HVAC dance performance major. Data collection activities were conducted over a period of several months, from May 27 to October 10, 2020. Participant observation involved actively attending sessions approximately every two weeks across various settings, including the HVAC conference room and the dance training room, among others. Throughout the study, 12 dance faculty teams were involved, providing a comprehensive view of the curriculum construction process. In addition, six rounds of in-depth interviews were conducted with groups of eight professional dancers to understand the typical work tasks dancers encounter in their professional careers, which was essential for ensuring that the CDP course addressed real-world tasks and competencies. Finally, a focus group discussion was held with the program team, students, and graduates to gain insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum alignment with the professional tasks' dancers face in their careers. The feedback collected during these sessions was instrumental in refining the curriculum to better meet industry standards and student needs.

In-depth interviews were conducted with managers of performance art troupes collaborating with HVAC, experienced dancers, and graduates of the program. Following the principle of "heterogeneity within groups and homogeneity between groups," participants were divided into groups, and the interviews were conducted in three carefully structured stages.

Recollection of Key Work Tasks

Participants were first guided to recall representative work tasks they had undertaken at various stages of their careers, particularly those that played a critical role in their professional development. This phase provided a direct understanding of the employment status of dance performance graduates and the talent needs of employers, offering valuable insights to support the precise formulation of course objectives.

Refinement and Categorization of Tasks

The listed tasks were then refined and categorized to identify the typical work tasks essential for the professional development of dancers. These tasks were subsequently ranked based on their level of difficulty and complexity, establishing a clear hierarchy of professional competencies.

Integration with Educational Standards

In the final stage, these findings were integrated with practical considerations, including the Ministry of Education's vocational education teaching standards, the school's teaching resources, faculty capabilities, and the foundational level of students. This process enabled the preliminary determination of the course's learning objectives, content, credit hours, and semester arrangement. This structured approach ensured that the course design was both aligned with industry needs and feasible within the institution's teaching framework, creating a robust foundation for bridging educational outcomes with professional demands.

Collective Dance Performance (CDP) Course Development Process and Data Analysis

The content of the original knowledge points of the CDP course was deconstructed and integrated according to the seven phases of the 4C/ID implementation system. These phases are: I) Identify real-world tasks; II) Design learning task categories; III) Determine constituent skills; IV) Design learning tasks; V) Extract and organize learning content; VI) Select instructional strategies; VII) Design instructional implementation plans.

Phase I), II), and IV) focus on the dance performance tasks, analyzing the course content against the authentic tasks encountered in professional work and daily life. Phase III) and V) act as bridges, converting tasks into teaching content. This involves decomposing and categorizing dance skills and analyzing these skills to cover all the competent behaviors required for group dance performances, thereby forming a comprehensive set of learning objectives at different levels. Phases VI) and VII) center around the design of instructional implementation plans, validating and summarizing all previous interview data, ultimately supporting the overall effectiveness of course development (van Merriënboer, 2017; Yang & Liu, 2022).

Identify Real-World Tasks

The real-world performance tasks of professional dancers serve as the starting point for applying the 4C/ID model in the Collective Dance Performance (CDP) course. These tasks are named using a "noun + verb" structure, where the noun specifies the task domain, and the verb defines the behavioral attributes of the task. Selecting precise verbs not only establishes the task boundaries but also clarifies the developmental focus for the corresponding task domain. This stage is critical for refining and positioning the overall course objectives. When defining the course's alignment with real-world tasks, the logical starting point is the application context that students will encounter after graduation, rather than focusing on teaching methods or knowledge acquisition during their studies. This ensures that the curriculum is rooted in practical relevance, directly preparing students for the professional demands of the dance industry.

Linking data to propositions is a crucial step in data analysis for case study. To establish the objectives of the CDP course, the typical work task analysis method was employed, focusing specifically on the data gathered during the second stage of in-depth interviews. The typical work tasks analysis is a competence-based approach that emphasizes the development of students' job-readiness and professional competency. Firstly, the real work scenario corresponding to the CDP course is identified, and then the specific work tasks required in this scenario are refined, and finally, based on these typical representative work tasks, the knowledge points are integrated and designed as learning tasks corresponding to the work tasks. The following Table 1 shows typical work tasks for the CDP course:

Table 1
Typical work tasks for the CDP course

Scenes from Work	Typical Work Tasks	Learning Task
Different Types of Gala Performances (Spring Festival Gala Evening)	Song performance accompanied by dance.	Learning the pattern of change in dance movement. Record the characteristics of rhythmic changes in music.
	Group dance performance.	Master the basic lines of stage formations. Maintain good cooperation with partners. Mastering the use of a variety of props.
Participation in other art forms	Performances of dance passages for plays and musicals.	Understand the characteristics of stage performances of different artistic. Understand the characteristics of stage performances of different artistic. Skillfully utilize the ability to perform dance in conjunction with other forms of artistic expression.
Dance competition	Collective dance performance.	Accurately express different dance styles. Present technical dance skills with emotion. The cooperation with the actors is tacit and harmonious. Performs spatial movement and formation changes with ease and skill.

In Table 1, particular attention was given to the influence of experienced dancers' knowledge and expertise on career growth. The focus was on extracting key experiences that marked significant milestones in their professional development, including entry-level roles, phases of outstanding performance, and pivotal moments of role and competency advancement. These experiences were used to identify the typical work tasks required in their career trajectory.

The interview data revealed that in the initial stage of their careers, the primary job task for new dancers is the performance of collective dance routines. The analysis concluded that these performances typically involve relatively low technical difficulty, easy control of stage space management, enhanced emotional expression through interaction, and reduced nervousness, all of which promote teamwork among dancers. Ultimately, through the descriptions provided by dance practice experts, clear learning tasks were distilled that directly correspond to the real-world job tasks.

Designing Learning Task Categories

The category of learning tasks refers to a set of specific tasks with the same level of difficulty. This stage is collaboratively completed by industry practitioners in dance, instructional design teams, and course instructors. This analysis primarily involved reducing both the absolute and relative difficulty of the real-world tasks, ensuring that the challenge level for learners remained at "current ability level +1." The learning tasks were then categorized into a sequence from simple to complex, based on their difficulty and academic progression (Yang & Liu, 2022). This process is divided into two steps.

First, practitioners are invited to classify the learning tasks identified in the initial stage by their level of difficulty. Tasks are ranked according to their complexity in real-world work scenarios, forming a sequence from simple to complex. This sequence establishes an overarching learning path within the task structure, focusing on the detailed representation of authentic work settings.

Second, each category of learning tasks is described in comprehensive detail. Clear descriptions of the defining factors for each task are essential to give learners an intuitive and holistic understanding. These descriptions help learners grasp the initial conditions and performance requirements for task completion, including the specific context of the task, the expected outcomes, and the standards to be achieved. This ensures that learners are well-prepared to meet the demands of the tasks with a clear understanding of the objectives and expectations. The following Table 2 shows the categories of learning tasks for the CDP course based on the interview results.

Table 2
CDP learning task category design

Course Title	**Collective Dance Performance**	**Course Hours**	**96 (hours)**
Learning Task Category	Course Content		
Learning Task 1:	Dance performance of a variety party: simple and regular movements; relatively simple expression of emotion.		
Students will face a scenario where the accompanying： Perform opening or closing dances for events such as galas or celebrations. The dance pieces typically do not require complex storyline. Spatial variations in formations are minimal, and the dance movements are relatively simple and repetitive, often supported by props that are straightforward to operate. Coordination among performers is relatively easy, focusing primarily on collective, synchronized movements. The music features a clear rhythm, making it easier to synchronize with the choreography.			
Learning Task 2:	Perform dances in collaboration with other art forms: the dance movements feature unique styles tailored to the specific art forms involved and are designed to convey a particular theme and emotional expression.		
Perform dances in collaboration with various stage art forms, such as drama, musicals, and immersive theater. Dance movements are tailored to align with the stylistic characteristics of each art form, as well as the unique requirements of specific themes, narratives, and musical elements. This task demands a deep understanding of the essence of multiple art forms. Performers must exhibit rich emotional expression, effectively portraying specific characters or groups and enhancing the stage atmosphere. The dance performance should seamlessly integrate with and complement the other artistic elements to create a cohesive and immersive theatrical experience.			
Learning Task 3:	Perform group dances in large-scale dance dramas and competitions: with a storyline and high expressiveness.		
Students will face a scenario where the accompanying： Perform group dances in large-scale dance dramas and competitions. These performances are characterized by specific themes, storyline, and roles, often inspired by diverse subjects such as historical legends, folk culture, or animals. The choreography			

is intricate, technically demanding, and stylistically diverse, requiring performers to effectively utilize and showcase their full range of skills.
Dance routines typically involve significant spatial transitions and dynamic formations, with multi-layered visuals requiring seamless coordination among performers. Rich emotional expressiveness is essential, ensuring alignment with the thematic essence of the performance. Proficiency in prop manipulation and a deep understanding of the music are required to seamlessly integrate musical elements with the dance's narrative and emotional depth.
Additionally, performers must possess foundational knowledge of stage elements such as lighting, set design, and technical installations. They should also demonstrate strong skills in overall styling, including costume design and makeup, to contribute to a polished and cohesive stage presence. These elements combine to create a performance that is not only technically impressive but also emotionally resonant and visually compelling.

Table 2 presents the structured process and content of learning task design for the CDP course, aligning with industry demands and the teaching principles of dance education. Each learning task is derived from real-world professional scenarios, with tasks increasing in complexity. They begin with foundational skills such as dance performances for celebratory events, progressing to intermediate tasks such as collaborating with other art forms, and culminating in advanced performances like dance dramas that emphasize narrative cohesion, artistic expression, and technical proficiency. This progression mirrors the stages of professional growth, allowing beginners to focus on essential skills, intermediate learners to integrate dance with other artistic expressions, and advanced students to master intricate and expressive performances. The progression of task difficulty aligns with the career development trajectory of dancers. Additionally, each task integrates technical, emotional, and contextual elements, such as mastering choreography, cultivating nuanced emotional expression, and adapting to various performance scenarios. This comprehensive and progressive design ensures that students develop the ability to quickly adapt to and apply their skills in group dance performances.

Identifying Constituent Skills

Gao (2017) stated that a skill is a behavioural performance by a learner in a competent manner in order to achieve a goal. The stage of identifying compositional skills focuses on two aspects. One is to break down the difficulty of group dance performance skills and the other is to categorise the attributes of group dance performance skills. It is to decompose the degree of the comprehensive skill of group dance performance, refine it to get the competent behaviours of each group of skills, and then develop detailed descriptions of each constituent skill to form academic objectives at different levels. This will develop evaluation tools that reflect the degree of achievement of the learner, which can be used to detect the degree of improvement of the learner in the learning process. This stage is one of the bridges to put task-based teaching into practice (Yang & Liu, 2022). The designed skill hierarchy map provides learners and lecturers with a blueprint for teaching and training, which ensures orderly, quality and efficient teaching and learning, and in addition, streamlines the amount of original lesson time. Figure 1 below shows the skill hierarchy chart for CDP course learning Task 1.

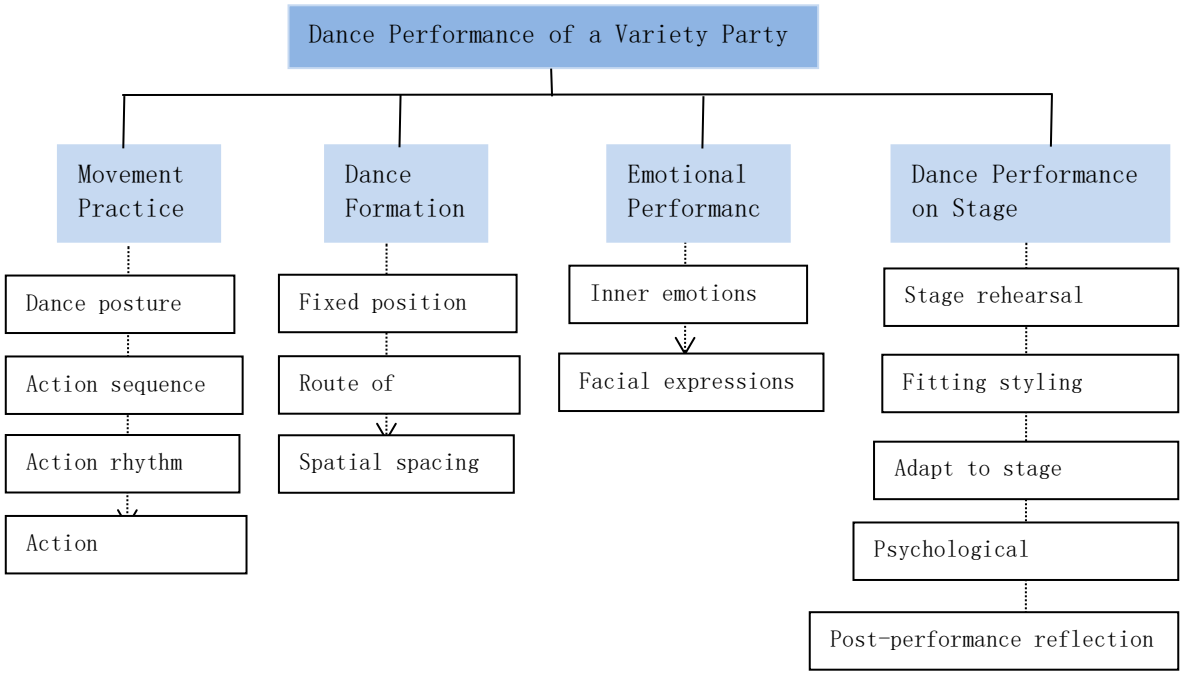

Figure 1. The skill hierarchy chart for CDP Course Learning Task 1.

The skill hierarchy in Figure 1 incorporates dance performance as a complete introductory task, aligning foundational skills with the concept of whole-task learning. By treating dance performance as an integrated beginner-level task, the structure ensures that learners acquire knowledge progressively, from basic to advanced levels, while maintaining the integrity of a complete work task. Foundational competencies such as posture, fixed positioning, and rhythm serve as the building blocks for intermediate skills like movement routes and seamless action connections. Advanced skills, including stage rehearsal and adaptation to stage lighting, emphasize technical and contextual mastery. The inclusion of post-performance reflection links outcomes to continuous improvement, fostering personal and professional growth. This approach not only supports the step-by-step acquisition of knowledge but also ensures that students develop a comprehensive understanding of all elements involved in a real-world dance performance.

Design Learning Tasks

Following the first three stages, the overall development and reconstruction of the CDP course content has been largely completed, and from the fifth to the seventh phase is mainly the teaching and learning implementation, which will not be discussed in this paper. The primary value of the learning task design stage lies in its role as a linking phase, transforming course content - traditionally referred to as teaching tasks into student-centered learning tasks. This transition highlights a key distinction between teaching tasks and learning tasks, rooted in the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered education.

Teaching tasks prioritize the effective transmission of knowledge and the construction of supportive learning environments, with teachers serving as the primary source of knowledge and authority in the classroom (Smith & Johnson, 2018). However, the evolution from course content to teaching tasks and finally to learning tasks reflects a deeper progression in modern

education, emphasizing knowledge reconstruction and transfer. While course content addresses "what to teach", teaching tasks encourage educators to focus on both "what to teach" and "how to teach". In contrast, learning tasks shift the focus to the learner's perspective, exploring "what to learn" and "how to learn".

At this stage, the design of learning tasks is carefully curated to guide students in gradually understanding the technical skills and strategies required for different levels of dance performance tasks. By incorporating "demonstration examples" from experts or skilled performers, learners are provided with concrete models to build a comprehensive understanding of how to creatively solve problems. This approach not only bridges the gap between teaching and learning but also leads to the development of tailored learning plans that cater to individual student needs, ensuring deeper engagement and mastery of essential skills for professional growth.

Results

The adoption of the 4C/ID model delineates the boundaries of the program content, ensuring that it is precisely matched to the work tasks that dancers encounter in their professional lives. This alignment is critical for ensuring that the teaching and learning process is closely linked to the career development model of the dance profession. Consequently, the CDP course serves as a pivotal bridge connecting dance learners to professional dancers, providing a clear pathway for the transition from education to employment.

Firstly, the course development began by clearly identifying the starting point of real-world tasks in dance performance, aligning it with the practical tasks dancers encounter in their work. Through detailed descriptions provided by dance practice experts on typical job tasks, specific learning tasks were distilled, reflecting the fundamental principle of aligning academic learning with professional application. This ensured that the curriculum was directly relevant to the demands of the dance profession.

Secondly, a "simplified conditions" approach was employed to analyze the difficulty of various forms and scenarios of group dance performance tasks. By reducing both the absolute and relative difficulty of these real-world tasks, the complexity of the tasks was adjusted to match the "current capability level of the learner +1". This approach allowed for the categorization of learning tasks into a sequence ranging from simple to complex, based on their difficulty and academic progression. This ensures that students are challenged appropriately and that the learning curve is gradual and manageable.

Finally, a hierarchical skill chart for group dance performances was designed, with skills progressing in complexity in accordance with the difficulty levels of the learning tasks. This provides learners and instructors with a clear blueprint for teaching and training, maximizing the guarantee of orderly, quality, and efficient implementation. This significantly enhances the practical value of the curriculum and students' employability. In addition, the model simplifies classroom time, saves teaching resources in various areas such as teachers, venues, and equipment, and improves the ability of dance teachers to use their pedagogical knowledge to solve pedagogical challenges.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the Four-Component Instructional Design (4C/ID) model effectively enhances the systematic and progressive instructional design of dance courses at Hebei Vocational Art College (HVAC). The findings of this study have several important implications for vocational dance education. First, the 4C/ID model offers a structured approach to curriculum design that can be adapted to other artistic disciplines, providing a replicable framework for vocational arts institutions. Second, the emphasis on authentic learning tasks ensures that students are better prepared for the complexities of professional roles, bridging the gap between education and industry. Third, the integration of supportive information and procedural information allows for a balanced approach to skill development, ensuring that students master both technical and creative aspects of dance performance. Finally, the focus on part-task practice provides opportunities for students to refine their skills in a controlled environment, reducing the cognitive load and enhancing learning efficiency.

Future research should explore the application of the 4C/ID model in other vocational arts programs, such as music, theater, and visual arts, to further validate its effectiveness across different artistic disciplines. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term impact of the 4C/ID model on students' professional success and career trajectories. By continuing to refine and adapt the 4C/ID model, vocational arts institutions can ensure that their curricula remain relevant and responsive to the evolving demands of the creative industries.

Although a single case study cannot fully validate the normative and exemplary value of the 4C/ID model, Parlett and Hamilton (1972) emphasize that case studies are particular, descriptive, and inductive—ultimately serving a heuristic function that deepens the reader's understanding of an issue. As such, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on dance education reform by offering an evidence-based approach to instructional design and highlighting the practical significance of integrating structured pedagogical models into vocational dance training. Future studies could expand on this work by exploring longitudinal outcomes, cross-institutional applications, and further refinements of 4C/ID-driven curriculum development in the performing arts.

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