
La enseñanza del danzón en escolares de sexto grado de la escuela primaria *Teaching danzon to elementary school sixth graders*

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Resumen: La enseñanza del danzón, como baile nacional de Cuba, en escolares primarios constituye una necesidad a profundizar por lo que representa en la formación integral de los mismos. Lo que se presenta es resultado de una investigación cualitativa que aplica métodos y técnicas de este corte, siguiendo una metodología, a partir del tratamiento de talleres de apreciación – creación, que faciliten el conocimiento y desarrollo de habilidades danzarias. De ahí el objetivo del trabajo, mostrar cómo pueden ser empleados los mismos en la búsqueda de una dinámica del proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje en los escolares con temas sugerentes para ellos.

Palabras clave: Proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje; Educación artística; Educación integral; Talleres

Abstract: The teaching of danzon, as Cuba's national dance, in primary schools is a necessity to be deepened because of what it represents in their integral formation. What is presented is the result of a qualitative research that applies methods and techniques of this cut, following a methodology, from the treatment of workshops of appreciation - creation, which facilitate the knowledge and development of dancing skills. Hence the objective of the, show how they can be employed in the search for a dynamic of the process of teaching learning in schoolchildren with topics suggestive to them.

Keywords: Teaching and learning process; Artistic education; Integral education; Workshops.

Introduction

Man, from his first steps as a social being, has manifested himself through the arts, which is why his creations from remote times reach the present day. In contemporary times, globalization overwhelms us, the transnationalization of culture tests the cultural policies of each nation and the loss of identity values, essential issues that distinguish us as a society.

Cuba's cultural development is the result of the excellent combination of knowledge about art in general, and the processes of gestation, development and decline of artistic trends, movements, periods and fashions. In all this long and complex process, dance is included, which, in its historical evolution has been influenced by the Spanish, French-Haitian, Asian and Afro-American dance expressions, from where later several repertoires of popular and ballroom dances emerged. Among all of them, the danzón, a ballroom dance, stands out as part of the Cuban intangible heritage

It is known that its origin is the result of the transculturation of the dance and the European contradiction, those who received the mestizo strong influence to create an authentic Creole dance. It has like initiatory figure Miguel Faílde, when the 1 of January of 1879, in the Lyceum of Matanzas, releases, accompanied by a wind orchestra, the first danzón, "The heights of Simpson", which, like musical complex groups the mambo and the chachachá.

In Sagua la Grande there is a tradition regarding the danzón dance, according to the bibliographic search carried out in the research process, (Millet, 2019), in February 1997 the danzón club "Pedro Lima Vegamar" is founded in the premises of the Chinese Casino in Céspedes street, by the degree María Caridad Alfonso and helped by Caridad Arredondo. At first it was formed by only four couples, those who in their youth enjoyed this dance.

As time passed by, this small club became part of the local House of Culture. Later on, with the work developed by the instructors of the House, it was possible to increase the number of members to 140, in addition to the existence of a children's dance club, a sign of the roots, growth and effort of everyone in terms of the preservation of this dance within the Sagüera society.

It is the purpose of Cuban education to form in an integral way its students from multiple ways. One of them is, precisely, the work developed by art instructors through appreciation-creation workshops, with suggestive topics, without stereotypes and that approach the tangible and intangible patrimony of the nation, seeing them as an essential scenario where culture and nation merge.

The teaching of danzón is contemplated in the Sixth Grade Program of Elementary Education, MINED, 2005 (Ministry of Education), in the unit referred to Music and Dances of Cuba, as well as in the Music Education Program of the Third Improvement of Elementary School, (MINED, 2016). In addition, as a policy, the artistic education of schoolchildren is reflected both in the Primary School Model (Rico, 2008) and in its adaptations ICCP, 2016(Central Institute of Pedagogical Sciences), both of which express the need for schoolchildren to show emotion and pride in the elements of culture that characterize Cuba by participating in the various artistic manifestations.

Several researchers have referred to the topic, (Cairo, 2011), (González, 2011), (Silveira, 2016), where it is argued, in some, from the theoretical point of view, that it is related to danzón, its origin and evolution, and in others they propose activities aimed at motivating and promoting danzón in the search for a greater knowledge of it by schoolchildren, however, they do not do it from the perspective of what the appreciation-creation workshops can contribute to the teaching of it in the sixth grade of elementary school.

From the experience and the exchange sustained by the authors in the research process carried out, it was possible to determine the existence of certain insufficiencies that cause the lack of motivation for dancing danzón in school children. Among them, it is possible to mention the scarce knowledge of the origin and evolution of this dance as Cuban national dance, the lack of knowledge about its main dancing characteristics, as well as the type of clothes and the interpretation of each part in the process of its execution.

The work presented in this article intends, then, to reveal some edges of this problem and how to contribute, from pedagogic science and scientific research to the achievement of danzón teaching in sixth grade students of primary education through appreciation-creation workshops, and to achieve the formation of a positive conscience towards the conservation of one of the intangible values of the nation's heritage.

Development

The article is derived from the results of a Diploma Paper by one of the authors, as part of the completion exercise of the Bachelor of Education, Art Instructor career, where the

qualitative methodological way was essentially used, and where participatory action research as a method prevails, based on the criteria given by Rodriguez & Garcia (2002. p. 55).

In the process that was developed, there were applied different theoretical methods, proper of pedagogic research, such as the historical - logical, the analytical - synthetic, the inductive - deductive and the structural systemic ones, which contributed, among other elements, the antecedents and evolution of danzón as Cuban national dance, and the findings in the order of potentialities and needs of its teaching in elementary school, which facilitated the elaboration and implementation of a system of workshops of appreciation - creation of dance directed to this objective.

It was also necessary the use of empirical methods that allowed corroborating the current state of danzón teaching in elementary school, among them the analysis of documents (Primary School Model, Documents of the Third Improvement of Education in Cuba, Programs of Subjects of the general curriculum and those of the artistic and aesthetic cycle). There were also used the participant observation for the diagnosis in a systematic way of the state of the problem, its features, its characteristics and the study of the best experiences derived from the own exchanges of the followed research process.

At the same time, in-depth interviews were conducted with certain key informants who, because of their characteristics and performance, are involved in working with school children. In this process, it is not possible to avoid the use of other methods and techniques that give reliability to the research based on the remaining evidence, in this case photos and videos were used. In the interpretation of the data obtained from the different sources with which we worked, it was necessary to use data triangulation.

As part of the access to the field, the José de la Luz y Caballero elementary school in the city of Sagua la Grande was selected. This moment of the research was propitious to establish all the organizational coordination with the school, as for the opening of the workshops, frequencies of execution, better schedules and the selection of the study group, which was intentionally formed by 25 sixth grade students, all of them with motivation for

the development of the activities and with scarce knowledge about danzón as Cuban national dance and the way to dance and interpret it.

The information obtained about the danzón and its characteristics, allowed the planning of workshops of appreciation - creation of dance, directed to the teaching of it. For the implementation of these workshops, we worked in coordination with the school, the local cultural center and the parents of the students, since some of them took place outside the school context.

The workshop has been present, simultaneously, in the scientific area, in the teaching area, in the cultural area and in the community area. The wide theoretical base that is possessed in this respect is what has facilitated changes in the ways of facing the pedagogical relationship that today is produced in the teaching environment. According to the methodological guidelines for the operation of provincial centers and cultural centers, (2005), **"the classes given by the instructors are called workshops, but these differ from those used in classical schools in that they encourage interaction, a different kind of feedback between the student and the teacher, because you learn by doing"**.

The workshop mode is used for both creation and appreciation. However, there are characteristics and regularities that particularize and differentiate both processes, even though whenever a creation workshop is developed, tools for appreciation must and can be offered. From the methodological point of view and respecting the logic of the different manifestations, four basic forms are recognized to develop the workshops. It was significant for the research that the workshops of appreciation - creation were developed with the children's sectors where theory, practice, intellectual knowledge and creation itself are intertwined.

It is currently difficult to differentiate between perception and creation because cognitive psychology and studies on artistic production and visual appreciation are reluctant to dissociate perceptual processes from those of creative elaboration. It is impossible to speak of the existence of a creation that originates from nothing, maintained only by the talent from which it comes in an artistic way without taking into account, in the aesthetic

elaboration, the personal baggage of each one, his experience and the environment where he develops.

The essential characteristics of the workshops were taken into account that they were varied and enjoyable, taking into account, of course, the psycho-pedagogical characteristics of the students in the study group, which contain suggestive elements about danzón through the use of television and sound media that help the students' appreciation.

It is important to emphasize the preparation of schoolchildren for the artistic cycle, since the way of their conception is directed towards the reaffirmation of the local, the autochthonous, the distinctive in the current Cuban school, in the search of educating and promoting feelings of identity and Cubanness.

The workshops implemented are the following:

Workshop N° 1: The danzón.

It aims to identify the characteristics and the basic step of danzón through the explanation of the art instructor and the demonstration of a couple from the local danzón club which allows a better knowledge of why it is the national dance of Cuba.

Proceed methodologically. As a motivational element, the game of the Magic Hat is carried out, which consists of placing several cards inside a hat with different questions such as; What Cuban dances do they know; Which of them are popular; Which are peasants; What do they know about danzón?

The group is formed in two work teams for the puzzle game, where each one will have a leader to guide how to put it together. This is done on the floor of the classroom and at the end, the costumes to be used in the dance of the danzón will be formed, both for the woman and the man.

School children are informed about the subject matter of the workshop, as well as the proposed objective and are invited to continue playing with a piñata, which contains candy cards where the different characteristics of the danzón are written. For this purpose, teams are also formed and the one who manages to guess them will be the winner.

After that, a couple from the city's adult danzón club is invited to tell their experiences and to motivate the school children. At the same time, they demonstrate how to dance a danzón accompanied by a musical piece.

In a second moment of the workshop, the students are placed in a circle to begin the warm-up techniques through the game Imitate the Leader, where they must perform the same actions as the art instructor, prior to the dance process. Head exercises, arm movements, as well as leg movements are performed. Once the warm up is over, the art instructor places the music, carrying out the rhythm with clapping, which must be done later by the students.

From here the group is organized in a horseshoe and the teaching of the basic step of the danzón begins. In this demonstrative part, they are also supported by the executions performed by the invited couple. Once this is concluded, the students, in pairs, will perform it.

At the end of the workshop, the students perform their demonstrations, answering questions formulated by the instructor about the essential theoretical aspects of danzón.

Closing of the workshop: a group and individual evaluation will be carried out by the students based on the results obtained, which will allow them to appreciate the advances in knowledge about danzón and the basic step to dance it. We appreciate the participation of the club couple, noting new motivations in the schoolchildren.

Analysis of the results obtained with the application of the workshop

During the application of the workshop, which takes place in the study group's classroom, it was found that the students were motivated to know everything related to danzón, but were not able to recognize its characteristics. At first, some of them were uneasy, easily distracted by any noise around them and conversed among themselves.

Then, the school children were encouraged to observe their own activity and that of their classmates, through the use of posters and a demonstration by a couple from the city's adult danzón club, who told about their experiences, and at the same time demonstrated how to dance a danzón. The school children were able to appreciate the origin, the composer and

the basic step of the danzón, with the purpose of achieving greater stimulation in the school children.

In addition, they learned the methodology of the basic step; at that time five school children did not want to execute the step manifesting not to like that dance but other more modern genres and were reluctant to dance them, the instructor gave them differentiated attention so that they did not feel isolated and thus managed to insert them in the group.

Workshop N° 2. Dancing Danzón.

The objective of this workshop is to execute the basic step and parts of the danzón through the explanation and demonstration of the art instructor, which allows the school children to learn more about the dance.

Methodological procedure.

The workshop begins by recalling the content of the previous one through the game El brillito, which consists of the couples having to execute the basic step of the danzón on a brick, without getting out of it, the couple that gets out loses and will have to repeat the procedure, thus reaffirming the skills already acquired in this sense.

Then, together with the art instructor, the previous warming up of all the parts of the body is made using the song "El juego del calentamiento". After this, a video clip is shown with the basic step of the danzón danced by adults, which favors the visualization and appreciation by the students. At the same time, the instructor explains methodologically how to perform it.

The group is divided into rows of five students to demonstrate, with these, how to execute the step with the help of music, this allows them to improve their hearing field and to identify the music used in the dance of danzón. Then they execute it with the instructor and finally they do it alone.

At another moment of the workshop, the instructor places the students in pairs and tells them to imagine that they are in a dance hall, that they are covered with elegant costumes and dresses and that they are going to execute, to the rhythm of the music, all the learned

steps of the danzón. Each student is corrected for mistakes that are appreciated and is shown how to do it well.

Closing of the workshop: a group and individual evaluation is made of the work done based on what was learned. It is important that each schoolchild recognizes where their greatest difficulties lie in order to move forward. The criteria of these are taken into account for the development of the other workshops.

Analysis of the results obtained with the application of the workshop

The workshop is also developed in the school context. At first, some students were a little distracted, but others expressed their desire to learn more about it. It was noted again that the students did not learn the basic step correctly and it was consolidated for them so that they could move on to other steps and these could be more easily grasped.

Later, through auditions and the viewing of a video from the local adult danzón club Pedro Lima Vegamar, they were able to appreciate other variations of this basic step and thus felt more motivated to perform them. At the end of the workshop they were concentrated, committed to the content and motivated by the activities developed.

Workshop N° 3. Dance danzón with me.

It aims to execute the variants of danzón through the explanation of the art instructor and the demonstration of children from the local danzon club which helps in the motivations towards this dance as a representation of Cuban folklore.

Proceed methodologically.

This workshop will take place in the Casa de la Cultura of the city. As a motivation for the workshop the art instructor will invite the school children to participate in the mirror game where they will have to imitate each of the movements that she executes, related to the steps of the danzón learned in previous workshops.

The school children who will learn in the workshop how to execute other steps of the danzón called vuelta de tornillo and danzón montuno, are invited to observe a sequence of steps executed by children from the local danzón club (the age ranges from 6 to 15 years),

which demonstrate both steps with precision and mastery. The school children are invited, together with the music, to carry the rhythm and the accent with clapping, which facilitates the development of the musical ear and thus identify which dance can be developed with it. Afterwards, a brief warm-up of all the parts of the body is performed, prior to the act of dancing.

The instructor demonstrates the methodology to follow to dance the danzón montuno and the paso vuelta de tornillo. She does it individually first, then she does it together with several couples, until everyone does it, in pairs, alone, without her guide, which makes it easier to correct the mistakes they make in the performances.

Closing of the workshop: a collective and individual evaluation of the work done is made, the best couples are highlighted and the criteria of the invited children from the local danzón club are also taken into account.

Analysis of the results obtained with the application of the workshop.

This workshop was given in the courtyard of the local House of Culture from suggestions given by the schoolchildren on how to make it more enjoyable, thus achieving a greater and better motivation to be in an open and welcoming place, although some schoolchildren showed shyness for this same cause.

A greater motivation is appreciated in the school children of the study group when observing several couples of the local children's danzón club who executed the steps addressed in the workshop.

Workshop N° 4. Dance my lovely danzón.

The objective of the workshop is to execute the box variant through the explanation and demonstration of the art instructor that allows the development of skills when dancing the danzón.

Proceed methodologically.

For the development of this workshop, the schoolchildren will move to the Central Park and the House of Culture of the city. A staging of the local adults and children's danzón club is

shown. In this way they will be able to clarify the doubts that have remained from the steps learned and the previous workshops and they will know another new step called Box or Drawer.

Once this moment is over, they will move to the interior of the Casa de la Cultura where, through different types of music, they will be able to carry out the rhythm with clapping, first the instructor, then with the school children and finally, these solos.

As a next activity, the art instructor explains and demonstrates how to develop the box or cajon variant, which the school children do with her help, until they can all do it in pairs.

In another moment of the workshop the instructor will carry out a small choreographic study putting into practice the displacements for the place and the utilization of the existing walks in the music. In this way, she will be able to check the development of skills achieved by the students. In this part, some couples of children and adults of the club of the danzón intervene in addition those that serve as referring to the study group for the execution of the dance.

The art instructor invites them to bring appropriate clothing for the next workshop that resembles the costumes used for the danzón dance, the girls should bring a hand fan. This allows the development of new motivations for the schoolchildren towards the dance.

Closing of the workshop: a collective and individual evaluation is made highlighting the best couples and how they can support the rest of the group in the skills needed to dance danzón.

Analysis of the results obtained with the application of the workshop.

New expectations were generated in the school children of the study group from the use of two different scenarios, with the participation, in addition, of the members of the club of danzón of the territory, both children and adults.

It is appreciated restlessness and nervousness in the students because of the scenarios where they carried out the workshop, new places for them, where there is a flow of people outside the process. Some did not achieve a correct execution, but the majority did, and in general,

felt at ease and were motivated by the actions taken. Despite these elements, the activity was developed correctly and empathy for the subject was established between the instructor and the students. In addition, progress in the development of dance skills in the schoolchildren of the study group is appreciated.

Workshop N° 5. Dancers to dance.

The aim of the workshop is to consolidate the steps and variations of danzón through demonstrations of the local danzón club to awaken love and motivation in schoolchildren towards Cuba's national dance.

Methodological procedure.

This workshop will take place in the dance hall of the Culture House and will have the participation of the Danzón Club associated with it. To start, a video is shown on a giant screen of a professional danzón couple so that the students can appreciate the costumes, designs, figures, styles and steps in each performance. Derived from the video, the art instructor will ask questions such as: Who was the creator of danzón? What year was it created? Why is danzón recognized as the national dance of Cuba? Who demonstrates the basic step of danzón and who demonstrates its variations learned in previous workshops? Then there will be a brief warm-up of all the parts of the body in the company of the other couples in the club. Afterwards, three dance couples from the club will be presented and, to the rhythm of the music, all the school children, in pairs, dressed according to the dance to be performed, will develop the dance with its basic step and its variations as they have learned in the previous workshops. This show will become a great dance festival, which will be appreciated by those attending the house of culture, including the parents of the schoolchildren.

As another moment of the workshop the art instructor auditions the song "Simpson's Heights" and instructs all the school children and guests to dance, with their respective partners. This allows her to evaluate the degree of skill development achieved by the students with respect to danzón and its steps, as well as the motivations achieved in this sense.

Closing of the workshop: a collective and individual evaluation of all the work done, of the knowledge and skills acquired, the best couples are selected and they will be invited, after coordination with the management of the local danzon club and their parents, to join it permanently.

Analysis of the results obtained with the application of the workshop

The results of the workshop can be seen in the use of audiovisual media in the process of art formation that can be appreciated by schoolchildren, the participation of parents and the public attending the workshop, given the scenario where it took place. More attention from the students was achieved during the appreciation of the audiovisual piece, an element that is valued as positive because of what it means later in the act of dancing.

The parents' feelings of satisfaction for the work done so far are appreciated, which facilitates their support in other moments of presentation of the study group in festivals and activities programmed by the school and other local institutions.

Closing of the validation of the appreciation workshops - dance creation

The closing stage of the implementation of the dance workshops for the teaching of danzón in the sixth grade students of José de la Luz y Caballero Elementary School, allowed the socialization of the results obtained through the demonstration of the most relevant couples of the study group in the period in which the research was developed, as well as the incorporation of them to the danzón club of the municipality.

It was possible to appreciate that the students felt happy and motivated to learn about danzón, its origin and evolution and how to learn to dance it through its basic steps, even though not all of them were able to develop them correctly. A better link was achieved among the school children of the study group with the members of the local danzón club, both children and adults. Some were selected to be active members of the club.

Something relevant was the use of different learning scenarios, not only the school context, which generated greater motivation in school children. From the methodological and educational point of view, the art instructor paid special attention to the needs of the students during the implementation and development of the workshops.

In general, the research demonstrated the correct use of themes that show the Cuban identity and autochthony from the use of danzón as a national dance, where it was also possible to

appreciate the potentialities that artistic education has in the integral formation of schoolchildren of these ages, as well as the relations and mediations that can be established between school, family and community as socializing agents of the teaching-learning process.

Conclusions

The implementation of the participative action research, using the selected methodological way, allowed the elaboration of workshops of appreciation - creation of dance, taking advantage of the different learning scenarios of the locality directed to the teaching of danzón as Cuban national dance in sixth grade elementary school students.

The proposal of workshops for the teaching of danzón provided knowledge in the schoolchildren from the use of audiovisual and sound media, as well as the direct accompaniment of the club of this dance of the locality, achieving the development of artistic skills in the appreciative and creative order in the study group with which it was worked.

The verification of the achieved results, evidences its effectiveness in the transformation of the study group, in what is related to the teaching of danzón, in its sound identification, in the abilities to develop its basic steps, in the use of the clothes that identify it, as well as in the sense of belonging and identity towards what is Cuban, which in turn constitutes a novel way of involving school children in the development of activities with good artistic and esthetic quality.

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