

REVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGICAL HANDBOOK ENTITLED *TÁNC – TANANYAG – MÓDSZER*

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Abstract

Experiments and realizations of the value-creating connections between theory and practice are published in this series, which is definitely a niche. The series and this volume present different approaches to research and practices combining the results and methodological solutions of ethnography, dance research and pedagogy. In my (critical) review, I looked at the writings of this volume, which is diverse in terms of content, form and genre, dealing with dance research, museology, pedagogical methodology, dance pedagogy, and national and folk knowledge.

Keywords: dance research, dance pedagogy, ethnology and homeland studies, folklore, museology

There is nothing greater than when theory and practice come together in an ideal balance to create a modern and at the same time a value-creating tool. In this case, values meeting at the intersection of the interdisciplinary fields of ethnography and pedagogy may generate a qualitative change that can enable “constructive life management” at both the social and the individual level (Bábosik & Mezei, 1997, p. 18). The reviewed book is the second volume of the *Tradíció és Edukáció* series published by the University of Debrecen. Its editor, Elek Bartha, stated that the goal of the series is to provide a “methodological toolkit” for teachers of ethnography and homeland, folklore, and folk-art in public education (i.e., in elementary, secondary, and vocational schools), for pre-service teachers, and for students of the humanities or social sciences (Bartha, 2018, p. 7).

The papers in the current volume are arranged in four thematic groups organized based on key concepts. Three studies are included which each cover separate topics (i.e., dance research, museology, and pedagogical methodology), while the fields of dance pedagogy, ethnography and homeland are each represented by three papers. With genres ranging from collections of ideas to research notes and academic treatises, the papers contained in the volume are diverse both in terms of content and form, which is in line with the original goals of the series.

In his paper titled *Traditional and new approaches in Hungarian folkdance research*, Máté Kavecsánszki briefly summarizes the old and new directions of Hungarian dance research and presents their parallels and differences. In addition to the institutionalization, forums, workshops, and results of dance research, he also covers Art of Movement theory, dance folklore, dance anthropology, and social

historical approaches. The author promotes the widespread dissemination of the latest research achievements and the establishment of a professional network. It is especially important that he draws attention to the significant shortcomings of critical dance research. He also highlights the methods of *la nouvelle histoire*, a post-modern trend in social history, and emphasizes the importance of applying them in dance science (pp. 27–28). With its systematic approach, critical perspective, innovative spirit, and professional yet understandable language, Kavacsánszki's paper is the summative and guiding text in the volume.

Co-authors Erzsébet Dani and Anna Mária Bólya present the results of their study examining an already functioning multidisciplinary educational-methodological model. In their investigation they analysed the effect of regulating the ratio between the teacher's lecture, their explanation, and the illustrative materials the teacher applies (in the authors' formulation, "the teacher's presence and the visual display") in the classroom. Knowledge transfer was measured using the so-called Szitó-questionnaire. The authors chose this method to test their model on seven different learning styles among the dance and dance teacher students at the Hungarian Dance University. Their investigation focuses on the cognitive modes and attention types (which they improperly denote as "cognitive and attention types") which are linked to the digital world and influence the processes of identity construction. By doing so their intention is to offer a methodological model that facilitates the development of 'deep attention'. Unfortunately, the questionnaires they applied are not only contradictory in certain points but also restricted, as they only quantify the impressions of the participants. Despite these issues, the model still has the potential to be successful.

As a practicing dance teacher, I agree with Nóra Ábrahám that dance theory is essential not only in dance teacher and dance artist training, but also in elementary art education. (In the case of the latter, it is mandatory to provide students with theoretical training once a week, from the third year onwards.) In her 15-page theoretical-methodological paper, Ábrahám seeks to build on Olga Szentpál's manuscript study. In the introductory sections she lays out the nine goals of her investigation, but I will highlight only the following examples:

- defining dance theory and emphasizing its role in physical education (p. 51);
- understanding the social relationships of the body in the context of dancing (p. 51);
- studying the compatibility of ethnography, dance history and dance orthography; understanding and changing the theoretical concept of dance (p. 52);
- defining professional dance along with its values and requirement (p. 52).

She approaches these themes from three different aspects, namely

- historical and cultural anthropological (p. 51)
- dance educational (p. 52)
- body conceptual (p. 52)

Finally, she concludes that her investigation also outlined the differences between dancer, performing artist, and choreographer, although it was not mentioned among her initial goals (p. 61). The above aims and the applied criteria, however, do not seem to correlate; what is more, they go beyond the scope of the paper and are probably

address the yet unanswered questions which can be formulated in the context of broader research. Additional critical observations can be made in regard to the text. Due to the author's unusual terminology, the paper is quite difficult to understand. Similarly, the style of writing inconsistently alternates between that of a scientific dissertation, an essay, and an informal report on personal experiences, which is not aligned with the author's intentions. Linguistic and stylistic discrepancies are accompanied by deficiencies in content: because of inconsistent reasoning, cause-and-effect relationships are difficult to follow. Last but not least, the frequent lack of bibliographical references undermines the credibility of the argument, such as when the author mentions the history of mentality or when she inserts descriptions related to the history of dance (pp. 52–54).

With its significant references to international research achievements, István Csont's article considers the appearance of virtual museum collections and online archives and discusses the associated methodological issues and various IT solutions. The paper covers the use of online archives and collections in museum pedagogy and emphasises the impact of public availability on the degree and quality of inclusive learning processes.

Based on her own work experience, Melinda Marinka describes the multifaceted, hybrid application of the project method on examples from German-language schools in the village of Rátka and other parts of North-eastern Hungary. She highlights that combining traditional and digital ethnographical approaches in pedagogical work can function as a new and useful tool for the education of today's "digital" or "Alpha-generation" and can provide solutions to the problems of the present. I consider her complex perspective extremely important because it not only provides opportunities for ethnographic research and pedagogy, but also serves as an inspiration for educational institutions – and especially teachers – to develop and implement similar projects and methods.

Eszter Juhász's paper gives an overview of the historical knowledge pertaining to the subject of homeland studies and ethnography, drawing from the interdisciplinary contexts of both history and ethnography (as a historical science). Her description of the relevant sections of the National Core Curriculum and the Framework Curriculum is followed by an overview of a number of pertinent printed and digital textbooks from different perspectives. Regarding the specifics of interactive 3D smart books (e.g., *Click n' Learn*), I must agree that the use of such modern pedagogical tools is only possible in an environment where the appropriate technical conditions are available both at school and at home, and the latter is still an obstacle in many cases.

Dóra Gyúróné Szenka's contribution also aims to map the relationship between the subjects of homeland studies and ethnography. Although the author emphasizes the importance of incorporating the achievements of ethnology along with its more critical perspectives in education (p. 128), she seems to pay less attention to this in her own pedagogical work. Her descriptions suggest that it would be important to apply source criticism in relation to both the professional works she describes as well as the references that appear in the curriculum in order to avoid the simple transmission of idyllic images and to raise awareness of stereotypes. Such idyllic images and stereotypes can be detected, for example, when the author applies János Arany's poem *Családi kör* [Family Circle] to peasant society, or in her generalizing

remark that peasant life was entirely governed by the Ten Commandments (or by religious belief *per se*). Particular detail is given the examination of the curriculum; in my opinion, however, several of the author's examples require more lengthy preparation and professional support than she indicates, such as the idea of simulating a wedding or "trying out" a female circle dance.

Ádám Mikulics discusses a possible methodology for teaching shepherd stick dances. In his introduction, he highlights the "process of conscious dance creation" and movement cognition as dance pedagogic objectives (pp. 151–152). He presents methodologies for the preparation and initial learning stages in detail and emphasizes that their practical application has not yet been achieved. Illustrated with examples from ethnographic field research, he describes the formation of the relationship between dancer and instrument, interprets the duality of the dance and the dancer's movement adapted to the musical structure, all of which play a decisive role in the development of the ability to consciously create and structure dance. Unfortunately, the excellent theoretical introduction is not followed by descriptions based on the author's own experience. Such a description could have been presented through the example of a lesson plan involving pedagogical practice in which polyphonic movement cognition, which can otherwise be learned through imitation, is strengthened by a new pedagogical procedure and results in a high-quality dance reconstruction.

In the last paper, Andrea Újné Pethő writes about her local historical project on locations and institutions in Debrecen that played an important role in the life of the writer Magda Szabó. The research is extremely colourful and imaginative, and its implementation makes it worthy of being a permanent part of the Hungarian *GeoGo* programme, an online facility for organizing sports, hiking, and leisure activities.

By combining the results and methodological solutions of ethnography, dance research, and pedagogy, both the series and its current volume present different approaches to research and pedagogical practices, and in this respect they definitely fill a critical gap. The increase in the number of articles in the volume indicates a widening professional community, which provides a more balanced range of content and supports the development of the still-forming structure of the series while also creating an opportunity for novice ethnographers and teachers to present their innovative solutions and ideas.

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