

Promoting Entrepreneurship for Dance Majors in Higher Education

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Dance graduates are more likely to become self-employed or undertake freelance work in the field of dance. To succeed and build a career, they need to understand the arts market and develop management and organization skills for planning, fundraising, application writing, promoting, and touring. In Korea, the low employability of dance graduates and lack of their entrepreneurial skills have been age-long problems because dance courses and module contents have given weight on dance technique modules. Dance departments have failed to develop gradueness and to provide the students satisfactory career guidance. It would be the best if, during university, students are given support not just in fulfilling their creative potential but also helping them gain confidence and adequate skills required to equip them for self-employment and freelance working. I thus suggest that to embed entrepreneurship across the dance curriculum can be an effective approach to address the reality of employment in dance and develop innovative career strategies. This article identified entrepreneurial competencies required for a successful career in the dance sector and suggested pedagogical approaches to enhance entrepreneurship for dance majors in higher education.

Keywords: dance curriculum; entrepreneurship; core competencies, dance graduate; dance career

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Introduction

This article aims to identify entrepreneurial competencies required for a successful career in the dance sector and suggest pedagogical approaches to enhance entrepreneurship for dance majors in higher education. Employability and enterprise have become key concerns to dance departments and academics in Korea. Their attentions to dance graduates' career primarily resulted from South Korean government's new education policy implemented in 2011, which fostered individuals to meet the needs of the job market. The job-focused education policy encouraged higher education institutions to undertake drastic restructuring measures according to the employment rate for their graduates. It then led to downsizing or closing humanities departments which have traditionally done poorly in the employment category. Likewise, dance departments have been shut downed or merged with other departments (Na et al., 2015, pp.14-16).

In Korea, in fact, the low employability of dance graduates and lack of their entrepreneurial skills have been age-long problems because dance courses and module contents have given weight on dance technique modules. Dance departments have failed to develop “‘graduateness’, a set of graduate competencies – skills, attitudes and abilities that make graduates capable as creative and flexible professionals” (Brown, 2003, p.1) and to provide the students satisfactory career guidance. According to my previous research project *A Study on Career Support for Young Artists based on a Survey on Their Employment Rates* (2015) collaborated with my colleagues and funded by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, it was indicated that over half respondents of recent dance graduates expressed concerns that they were insufficiently prepared for employment or self-employment by their university studies and called for more modules on career guidance and development (Na et al., 2015, p.59).

Dance graduates are more likely to become self-employed or undertake freelance work in the field of dance (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2016). To succeed and build a career, they need to understand the arts market and develop management and organization skills for planning, fundraising, application writing, promoting, and touring. It would be the best if, during university, students are given support not just in fulfilling their creative potential but also helping them gain confidence and adequate skills required to equip them for self-employment and freelance working. I thus suggest that to embed entrepreneurship across the dance curriculum can be an effective approach to address the reality of employment in dance and develop innovative career strategies.

Some dance researchers have interrogated dance department curricula and the employment rate of dance graduates and problematized the lack of career education as well as employability skills and knowledge. They have then proposed possible pedagogical approaches to enhance

employability and broaden career paths (Suh & Lee, 2012; Bae, 2016; Shin, 2017; Moon et al., 2017). Bae (2016) and Shin (2017), in particular, elaborate more strategic directions to develop employability and professional practice of dance graduates. The former focuses on the industry-institution-government cooperation plans while the latter the coherent coordination of admission, curricular activity, and career education. Different from the above researchers, I intend to examine possible ways to promote entrepreneurship education, rather than general career guidance and development, as a pedagogical strategy *within* higher education institutions.

As a follow-up to my initial study on arts entrepreneurship curricula in dance departments in South Korea that investigates and evaluates current dance module contents relevant to entrepreneurial competencies (Na & Han, 2015), this research will suggest a range of feasible ways to embed entrepreneurship into the dance curriculum. To conduct the study, I review literature on core entrepreneurial competencies required to create real and sustainable professional career opportunities. I also delve into a range of case studies of performing arts and/or dance courses with entrepreneurship focus. This research basically consists of three parts. The first is to conceptualize entrepreneurship in dance. Here I will articulate what entrepreneurship means in the field of dance since entrepreneurship education is still new and considered idiosyncratic in the dance curriculum at Korean universities. Second, a set of entrepreneurship competencies required of dance practitioners will be identified. Lastly, I will propose prospect ways of embedding entrepreneurship in the dance curriculum.

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship in Dance

Terminologically, entrepreneurship means the ability and willingness to initiate, design, and run a new venture with risk taking in order to produce a profit. That is to say, it is not simply about knowledge and skills, but more about behaviors and attitudes needed to organize and manage a business (Gibb, 1998; Brown, 2004). It is about initiating a change, developing a new idea, putting the idea into action, proactively responding to the market and society, and taking risks (Burns, 2007, p.6).

Entrepreneurship is the capacity required to not just professions in arts management, but also to most of artists in professional environments. As freelance and self-employed artists, most dance graduates face a need to come to terms with commercial environment in order to be able to make enough money to continue their artistic work or see the commercial market as a means of communicating with larger audience. Therefore, it is inevitable for them to develop the necessary management, organizational, and communication skills to facilitate the performance and promotion

of their work. In other words, they work as artists, but also need to work as entrepreneur as well.

Susanne Burns enumerates peculiar characteristics of the dancer's world, which are distinguish from the other sectors (Burns, 2007, p.7). Dancers work collaboratively to produce and distribute a work, so the abilities for collaborative and partnership working are essential. Dancers do not always create market-oriented product. Instead, they produce a work and then search for a market. For marketing, they need to create a demand, rather than supply it, which is possible with the understanding of the market, trends, and contexts.

One might raise a question whether entrepreneurship education means learning a set of business skill. Garry Beckman argues that arts entrepreneurship should be educated in a context-based curriculum rather than a business-based curriculum. A typical "business-based" arts entrepreneurship curriculum is primarily composed of courses originating from business schools. In this curriculum, business skill sets and knowledge are taught and students are provided with experiential opportunities (mostly in the form of internships) (Beckman, 2007, pp.96-97).

By contrast, a "context-based" curriculum for arts entrepreneurship is grounded on a broader conception of entrepreneurship education as "transitioning" from higher education to a professional arts environment, not just as "new venture creation". It focuses on empowering students to self-develop new and innovative outcomes as practitioners in the arts. The context-based curriculum encompasses the acquisition of a set of skills (professional practices, business skills, and communicative skills) and the contextualization of those skill sets through the understanding of arts policy, arts culture, arts management, and experiential opportunities. After graduation, these students' career pathways would be multidimensional. They may set out to start for-profit and nonprofit business, participate in arts and arts-related industries, have portfolio career and so on. Even when students find themselves in traditional arts employment, they would initiate a change in a professional environment, based on a broader understanding of the arts environment (Beckman, 2007, pp.97-98). Reflecting Beckman's model, I insist that dance entrepreneurship education should not be viewed as one that teaches business skill sets for doing a for-profit business. It should be envisioned as one that integrates entrepreneurial theories and behaviors with professional practices in order to produce innovative practices in the dance and dance-related industry.

When entrepreneurship is considered as transitioning students from higher education to practitioners in arts professions, entrepreneurial skills may be indistinguishable from employability. The two terms, employability and entrepreneurship, are often interchangeably used and taken to mean analogous things. In education, employability is defined as "the capability to move

self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment. For the individual, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers and the context...within which they work” (Hillage and Pollard, 1998, p. 12). Employability implies having a set of skills and behaviors which can be performed in professional working environments and which are usually congenial to conventional practices in a particular industry. As a professional dancer, s/he would be expected to meet conventional criteria for employability including not only skilled movement techniques, body flexibility, physical strength, stage presence, and expressivity but also diligence, passion, creativity, collaboration, openness and so on.

Employability and entrepreneurship are similar but discrete. Mark Evans points out that entrepreneurship within the performing arts industry is directly related to the startup of an arts-related venture and self-employment (Evans, 2006, p.4). Dancers as entrepreneurs are expected to not only demonstrate performance and employability skills, but also acquire business knowledges and skills such as business planning, marketing, promotion, communication, negotiation, and entrepreneurial attitudes such as self-management, self-motivation, self-presentation, flexibility, creativity, risk-taking, self-confidence, and leadership (Onstenck, 2003, p.76; Evans, 2006, p.4)

Identifying Core Entrepreneurial Competencies in Dance

In that entrepreneurship embraces a demanding set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes, it is vital to identify what core entrepreneurial competencies required of dance professionals are and how importantly these competencies are recognized and taught in the dance curricula in Korea.

In his report *Performing Arts Entrepreneurship* (2004), Ralph Brown lists the key skills for effective cultural entrepreneurship, which are “partnership and promotion strategies”, “effective communication skills”, “financial self-sufficiency”, “a balance between creative independence and qualities allowing mutually beneficial networking” and “the ability to combine understanding and experience of financial and management affairs with artistic talent and experience” (Brown, 2004, p. 10). Drawing on the work of other scholars’ works on cultural entrepreneurship including Brown and reflecting the characteristics of the dance world, Burns suggests the following entrepreneurial skills as essential to dance artists: “the ability to balance creative independence with the ability to work collaboratively”, “the ability to manage artistic integrity within a market context”, “the ability to manage self”, “the ability to create financial self-sufficiency through the management of skills”, “the ability to adopt a creative and lateral approach”, “the ability to create networks,

maintain and manage them and communicate effectively”, and “the ability to be proactive, pragmatic and flexible” (Burns, 2007, p.7).

These entrepreneurial skills are largely addressed in the benchmark statements for Dance, Drama and Performance (DDP) by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), revised in July 2015. As the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education, QAA provides details of what dance, drama, and performance graduates might reasonably be expected to achieve. The benchmark statements are the key criteria for designing, delivering, and reviewing the curriculum. It is indicated that

Different skills and knowledge are called for in the different destinations of graduates in this area. Common destinations include the professional arts, commercial and non-profit performance industries, applied and community arts, education, scholarship and the creative and cultural industries. ‘Graduate-ness’ in this domain cannot be defined in the singular but will involve a range of both subject-specific and generic skills. Skills and attributes of Dance, Drama and Performance graduates are highly sought after by non-cognate industries. These skills include those of communication (written, oral and performance), of research and analysis, the ability to work independently, interpersonally and in groups, to deadlines and under pressure, with flexibility, imagination, self-motivation and organization.

(QAA, 2015, p.9)

The subject benchmark statement for DDP then identifies the following essential subject-specific and generic and graduate skills. Subject-specific skills include “making, creating and performing”, “critical response/analysis”, and “application and participation.” Generic and graduate skills comprise “self-management”, “critical engagement”, “group/teamworking and social skills”, and “skills in communication and presentation”. Among them, the three skills, “self-management”, “group/teamworking and social skills”, and “skills in communication and presentation” are particularly associated with entrepreneurial skills.

In the statement, “self-management” means the ability to work independently and effectively; to control risks, health, and safety; to plan ahead but adapt successfully to changing situations and environments; to apply one’s own potential and strength to situations and identify professional development needs. “Group/team working and social skills” mean the ability to work with others both as a leader and as a collaborator; to share individual ideas and pursue collective goals; to handle interpersonal issues; to negotiate different opinions and resolve conflict; to understand

others' social, cultural, and ideological positions. "Skills in communication and presentation" mean the ability to develop and present ideas in visual, physical, oral, and textual forms; to produce written work in an appropriate scholarly way; to gather, select, and organize information; to build digital literacy.

In Korea, there has been no consensus on academic standards expected of dance graduates. Human Resources Development Service (HRD) of Korea had developed National Competency Standards (NCS) from the early 2000s. NCS is a concept which identifies and standardizes competencies which are required for successful job performance. It is comprehensive concept including abilities such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to perform a job, and assessment of the ability. Although HRD Korea made efforts to 847 NCSs by 2015, NCS for dance professions are not identified. Under this circumstance, Min Hye Shin's doctorate research "Competency-Based Curriculum for Expansion of Students' Career Spectrum in the Dance Department" (2015) can be a useful reference point. Her research examines dance competencies and their hierarchy and importance by conducting literature review, Delphi method, and Analytical Hierarchical Process (AHP). It then investigates the importance of the key competencies in terms of time allocated in the dance curricula of six universities. According to her research, the ten core competencies ranked in order of importance are "dance performance", "self-management", "autonomy/independence", "creativity", "liberal arts & major studies", "interpersonal relation", "sense of challenge", "information processing", "cultural susceptibility", and "multiculturalism". Shin finds out that current curricula in the six dance departments tend to weigh much on the competency of "liberal arts & major studies", "dance performance", and "creativity". In contrast, modules that encourage the ability of "self-management", "autonomy/independence", and "interpersonal relation" are insufficiently provided. Her study reveals that the most important skill required of the dancer is considered artistic and performance-related skills. At the same time, it recognizes that for the diversification and expansion of the career spectrum, self-management, communicative skills, risk-taking, and informational retrieval skills are required, but less time is devoted to imparting them explicitly. Innovative ways of developing the required entrepreneurial skills need to be devised to incorporate the skills in explicit and implicit ways through teaching and learning strategies in the delivery of dance curriculum.

Embedding Entrepreneurship into the Dance Curriculum

There has been an agreement among most current research in the field of performing arts that the best practice would be to embed entrepreneurship provision across the curriculum and help

students proceed to develop professional and entrepreneurial qualities and skills to higher levels on their courses (Brown, 2004; Evans, 2006; Burns, 2007; Childs & Clegg, 2016). By drawing upon previous research involving the case studies of entrepreneurial education within performing arts courses (Brown, 2004; Evans, 2006; Burns, 2007; Hunter and Gladstone, 2009; Childs and Clegg, 2015), this article suggests possible effective approaches to develop entrepreneurial competencies within the dance curriculum in Korea. Taken Korean institutional contexts into consideration, they are broadly categorized into four pedagogical approaches.

1) Embedding entrepreneurship in implicit way

Through dialogues and interactions with professional dance practitioners and representatives of dance or dance-related organizations in mentoring and regular class/workshops formats, students have opportunities to understand current practices and policies and glimpse the reality of the dance world. Students become more aware of how dance practitioners work in the professional field and what kind of work opportunities are out there. They begin to recognize that career paths are not pre-determined and diversified and to envisage themselves as professionals and as autonomous learners rather than dependent ones.

2) Modules on entrepreneurship

A specific module on entrepreneurship teach both dance-specific and generic knowledge and skills required of dance professions, including knowledge of the dance sector, infrastructure and policy, knowledge of key dance organizations and agencies, CV/proposal writing, audition/interview techniques, professional/business planning and so on. Also, it guides the students on how to present themselves and their work in a convincing, creative, and confident way, demonstrating a thorough range of marketing, promotion, and communication skills. The module prepares them to seek out and create professional opportunities within dance or associated industries, or in new fields.

3) Modules on professional practice with the dance world

A module on professional practice with the dance world aims to provide students with opportunities to apply skills and knowledge in professional contexts by virtue of partnerships with local organizations, artists, and companies. By connecting with its communities in this way, students can gain “real life” world experience and prepare a portfolio career whilst meeting the need of its local community. In this progression route, both the local community and student employability are enhanced.

4) Business Start-up Support Service

Business start-up support service offers direct encouragement, advice, and assistance for start-up businesses and self-employment within the dance and dance-related industry. To fill the gap between higher education and professional work environments, it helps students progress through key phases of their development from planning a business project through the early stages of growth to take-off.

Conclusion

This article problematized a low level of education for employability and entrepreneurial competencies of dance students within Korean higher education institutions, which have led to the lack of knowledge of the dance sector, market, and policy as well as self-management attitudes and funding, marketing, promotion, and presentation skills. I argued that embedding entrepreneurship education in the dance curriculum would be the best practice that enables students to enhance gradueness and prepare for the broader range of career pathways in dance and dance-related industries. To design and deliver entrepreneurship education in the curriculum, the identification of entrepreneurial competencies required for a successful career in the dance sector was proceeded, based on previous literature reviews on entrepreneurship/employability competencies in performing arts and dance. As a result, it was shown that dance professions were primarily required to have the ability for self-management, collaboration, and communication and presentation skills. It was also confirmed that, for Korean educators and scholars, entrepreneurial skills were considered essential in the dance curriculum, but less time was allocated to these skills compared to artistic and performance-related skills. Reflecting this issue with higher education provision, I proposed four pedagogical approaches to enhance entrepreneurship for dance majors, which are embedding entrepreneurship in implicit way; designing modules on entrepreneurship or professional practice with the dance world; operating business start-up support service.

In the Korean context of dance higher education, there has been a disinclination to acknowledge the significance and value of entrepreneurship as dance has been often dissociated from traditional concepts of business and enterprise. However, not just the government's job-focused education policy in Korea but also the limited range of career pathways and employment opportunities for dance graduates have gradually brought about the change of perception about employability and enterprise skills in dance within higher education institutions. I believe that to successfully implement the pedagogical approaches that I suggested inevitably requires teachers' responsibilities. Teachers should help dance students appreciate the market value and/or commercial potential of

their work. Also, they should encourage students to recognize the link between coursework and their career destinations through means of personal development plan or reflective practice. Moreover, they should secure continued institutional support for the pedagogical approaches. Lastly, they should make effort to build a good partnership with relevant practitioners and organizations.

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