Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-Driven Intercultural Citizenship Education through Dance-Fitness Development: A Classroom Research Project Based on History Research into Japanese Traditional Performing Art (Menburyu)

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Abstract : SDG-driven intercultural citizenship education through performing arts and history research, combined with dance-fitness development inspired by performing arts, can provide a third space in which performing arts, local history, and contemporary society drive educational and social development, supporting the performing arts in student-generated ways, reflecting their sense, priorities, and goals. Within a string of rugged volcanic peninsulas along the north-western coastline of the Ariake Sea, Kyushu, southern Japan, are found a range of traditional performing arts endangered in Japan's ageing society, including Menburyu mask dance. From 2017, Menburyu culture and history were explored with Menburyu veterans and students within Houghton's FURYU Educational Program (FEP) at Saga University. Through collaboration with professional fitness instructor Kazuki Miyata, basic Menburyu movements and concepts were blended into aerobics routines to generate Menburyu-Inspired Dance-Fitness (MIDF). Drawing on history, legends, and myths, three important storylines for understanding Menburyu, captured in students' bilingual (English/Japanese) exhibition panels, emerged: harvest, demons and gods, and the Battle of Tadenawate 1530. Houghton and Miyata performed the first MIDF routine at the 22nd Traditional Performing Arts Festival at Yutoku Inari Shrine, Kashima, in September 2019. FEP exhibitions, dance-fitness events, and MIDF performance have been reported in the media locally and nationally. In an action research case study, a classroom research project was conducted with four female Japanese students over fifteen three-hour online lessons (April-July 2020). Part 1 of each lesson focused on Menburyu history. This included a guest lecture by Kensuke Ryuzoji. The three Menburyu storylines served as keys for exploring Menburyu history from international standpoints.Part 2 focused on the development of MIDF basic steps and an online MIDF event with outside guests. Through post-lesson reflective diaries and reports/videos documenting their experience, students engaged in heritage management, intercultural dialogue, health/fitness, technology and art generation activities within the FEP, centring on UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including health and wellness (SDG3), and quality education (SDG4), taking a glocal approach. In this presentation, qualitative analysis of student-generated reflective diary and reports will be presented to reveal educational processes, learning outcomes,and apparent areas of (potential) social impact of this classroom research project. Data will be presented in two main parts: (1) The mutually beneficial relationship between local traditional performing arts research and local history researchwill be addressed. One has the power both inform and illuminate the other given their deep connections. This can drive the development of students' intercultural history competence related to and through the performing arts. (2) The development of dance-fitness inspired by traditional performing arts provides a third space in which performing arts, local history and contemporary society can be connected through SDG-driven education inside the classroom in ways that can also drive social innovation outside the classroom, potentially supporting the performing arts itself in student-generated ways, reflecting their own sense, priorities and social goals. Links will be drawn with intercultural citizenship, strengths and weaknesses of this teaching approach will be highlighted, and avenues for future research in this exciting new area will be suggested.

Keywords : cultural traditions, dance-fitness performance and participation, intercultural communication approach, mask dance origins