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Introduction

This article approaches the idea of interdisciplinarity as an aspect of the globalization of pedagogical practices through the teaching of *kathak* dance in France. Our study positions itself in a didactic research program that tackles the question of interdisciplinarity under the theoretical angle of joint action between teacher and students (Ranganathan 2004; Ranganathan and Petrefalvi 2007; Sensevy and Mercier 2007; Loquet, Roncin, and Roesslé 2007; Loquet 2007). In this program, “didactics” is defined as the science whose object of study covers educational, teaching, and training practices. Our contribution to this program concerns the field of knowledge related to the body, in particular in sports and artistic activities (Loquet 2006). The ambition of research in didactics currently taking place in France is to show that the teacher’s action cannot be treated in a unilateral way, independent of the student’s action, just as the interactions between teacher and student cannot be set apart from the objects of knowledge that unite them. In this model, we grant a central place to the concept of “milieu,” seen in a general way as the space where the teacher and the students interact.

The Indian teacher and the French students operate in what we shall call a “milieu,” defined as an interdisciplinary space where two disciplinary regimes collide and interact. The *kathak* teacher incarnates one discipline composed of academic codes from the Indian

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tradition; the second discipline “lives” in the bodies of the French students and is made up of their everyday behavioral codes resulting from their common experiences in France (including the residue of aesthetic gestures that comprise French theatrical representation). To develop an interdisciplinary space conducive to teaching dance is new in the field of dance education in France. Moreover, the broad diffusion of cultural practices in a global environment necessitates reflection on what constitutes specialization in a discipline, as well as on the contents and former teaching methods for a discipline such as *kathak*. Certain disciplines are rather conservative concerning the need for interdisciplinary adjustments. Indeed, the question is how to reconcile the discipline itself with the trend toward the international circulation of disciplinary knowledge and practices—the transversality of disciplines—while still safeguarding the norms defined by that traditional discipline. Indian dance, in particular, is a structured discipline that is historically constituted of ancient works, comprising a specific tradition of knowledge whose contours have been fixed by successive encodings over time. This student-teacher interaction demonstrates that during the intercultural encounter over the discipline, other reactions pertaining to social and political differences take place. Thus, there is an intercultural obligation to create the means of appropriate transfer of knowledge in France. The Indian discipline, which we aim to demonstrate in our teaching, is indisputably complex because access to its knowledge is controlled by specific schools or organized systems of study. It is disciplinary in nature. Thus, it could never be seized or communicated in its entirety if the teaching process did not rebuild a new *kathak* discipline, a practical and concrete form tailored for a specific *milieu*. This space between the teacher and the students has two characteristics: one of “resistance”—engendered by the disciplinary restrictions the discipline imposes—and the other of common cognitive context—that is, the background that allows for the mutual comprehension between teacher and student. With the concept of background (borrowed from Wittgenstein and introduced into a didactic use by Sarrazy 1996), we underline the consensual basis on which teachers and students need to work together.

The theatrical play that includes gestures (*mūdras*) and facial expressions (*abhinaya*), (Ghosh 1992) supposes the existence of a symbolic code and criteria of linguistic transparency (verbal and nonverbal, gestural and facial), which make the dancer’s message comprehensible to the spectator. It is with this articulation that we identify principal resistances to *kathak*, which are basically linked to moving around in a system of constraints and expressing oneself in a particular symbolic code. Thus, this specific medium of *kathak* mobilizes simultaneous implications of rhythmic objects (ankle bells, sounds of melody and percussion), body actions (hand gestures, footwork, gyrations) and permutations of corporeal/body movement, which is marked off within narrative boundaries (a story based on the legends and mythology) and with the main objective of sharing significances with the public. *Kathak* is among the oldest classical dances of India, drawing its origins from treatises written between the second and fifth century before Jesus Christ (Ghosh 1956/1967). Given this tradition, Indian specialists might well hesitate to modify the original contents and methods of teaching with an interdisciplinary pedagogy. In fact, the construction of a “milieu” intended for the practice of *kathak* in France imposes close examination and critical questioning of traditional teaching methods. Dance (or, for that

matter, any discipline) resulting from two different cultures, Indian and European, does not have the same “grammar.” That is, the process of teaching *kathak* in France enables us to evaluate the diversity of the possible references present in the *kathak* discipline. To think of unicity or univocity of these references in the discipline as taught is impossible. By losing sight of such diversity, a teacher could be tempted to present the dance lesson as a progressive step-by-step process, where gestures are mechanically taken from the repertory to be isolated and repeated several times and result in “the recital” where students perform the discipline they have learned on stage. However, where educational practices encourage us to take into account the globalization of cultural exchanges and the circulation of knowledge at the international level, the call for interdisciplinarity is omnipresent (Bharucha 2000). According to Rustom Bharucha, the power of the intercultural imaginary can radically shape the twenty-first century, and he demonstrates that theater and the performing arts could constitute laboratories of inter- and intracultural experiments connecting Indian traditional or transnational forces with heterogeneous global forces, bringing us to the crossroads of cultures.

Through his exploration of the social and political dynamics of emergent cultural practices, Bharucha connects the dramatic traditions of East and West. This is why we use the concept of a “dynamic artistic teaching,” which aims at building a well-integrated culture in students and not simply at transmitting knowledge and practices to them. Recent theoretical developments in anthropology have sought to explain contemporary processes of cultural globalization and transnational flows of cultures. The “anthropology of place” or “cultural context” approach attempts to understand and explain how dominant cultural forms are “imposed, invented, reworked, and transformed” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, 5). Responsive to this tendency, an ethnographic approach must study the interrelations of culture, power, and place: place making, identity, and resistance, this last understood as a natural opposition toward any new culture. Acculturation is considered as a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviors of another group. Although acculturation is usually in the direction of a minority group (Indians) adopting habits and language patterns of the dominant group (French), it can be a reciprocal process, whereby the dominant group adopts patterns typical of the minority group. This is exactly what takes place in our case. Assimilation of one cultural group into another may be evidenced by adoption of common attitudes and/or changes in social values leading to the loosening of separatist political or ethnic identification. Anthropologists Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits developed the following definition of acculturation: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (1936, 149).

Poirier (1972) has qualified the act of intercultural dynamics as a progressive change in culture, which is a process of accepting and exchanging ideas or cultures. In our case, we borrow his terminology to define our program as (a) cultural contact: initial encounter between French and Indian cultures; (b) counter-acculturation: resistance and common cognitive context which represents an intermediary level of acceptance; and (c) acculturation, which involves the dynamic movement of one culture evolving under the influence

of the other, leading to assimilation and integration of new cultural attitudes. Nevertheless, we must also consider the concept of cultural appropriation—that is, the adoption of some specific elements of one culture (Indian) by a different cultural group (French students). It can include the introduction of forms of dress or personal adornment and artistic or behavioral expression. These elements are typically imported into the existing culture and may have wildly different meanings or may lack the subtleties of their original cultural context. Because of this possible dilution, cultural appropriation is sometimes viewed negatively by some traditional Indian “Gurus” or scholars and has been perceived as “cultural theft.” This is exactly what we want to avoid.

In teaching Indian dance in France, we question the interface between the two cultures, keeping in mind the fact that *kathak* is less known than its counterpart Bharata Natyam and that unlike in other countries, the Indian diaspora in France is very small and mainly composed of Indians from the former five French colonies in India (Pondichery, Karikal, Yanaon, Mahé, and Chandanagar). This dance, which is exported from its traditional Indian cultural background and transposed into the French cultural setting, is inevitably considered idiosyncratically: it is sometimes idealized (as the magic of India and its ancestral dances, where stress is on complete body-mind control) and/or distorted (when it becomes synonymous with the oriental belly dance or “Bollywood”). Hence, for the transmission of *kathak* in France the manufacture of an interdisciplinary milieu is understood to be a major concern of teaching today. Certain risks inevitably occur when some teachers, quite keen on making this discipline accessible to non-Indian students, find themselves in the midst of a disciplinary popularization, which simplifies the practice and distorts meanings, leading to a dilution (often involuntary) of the teaching contents due to a loss of the original cultural context. These risks, related to the manufacture of a milieu, tend to oppose the traditional disciplinary contents with the contents taught in the new culture. However, this new interdisciplinary teaching content, even if it is different from its original form, has its own reasons to exist, because without the rebuilding of contents, the act of teaching *kathak* dance in France would not take place optimally. Here, the context is both pedagogical and movement oriented: *we need to consider interdisciplinarity as an intercultural negotiation between disciplines, as shift from primarily text-based disciplines to performativity and as a combination of subjective experiences with particularized practices.* However, if this rebuilding is viable under the very ordinary conditions of dance lessons, it should not hide the passive inertia inherent in a lack of adaptability, which is inconceivable in the Indian cultural context and is especially ineffective with respect to an interdisciplinary integration where contents and contexts differ. The case of the Indian dance in France is studied to reflect on other similar cases of interdisciplinary teaching from the practical and theoretical angles and, in particular, on cases where the situations of transmission have both unquestionable advantages—students highly attracted by the innovative and exotic character of the object of study—and important obstacles resulting from the heterogeneity of interpretations and representations by students when introduced to the object of study.

Questioning and Hypothesis

Our present study is a question of showing from a pragmatic angle, and thanks to the organization of a certain interdisciplinary space, how to make French students express a narrative account corporeally; this is an activity that is usually reserved for the experienced Indian dancers. We note from a theoretical view how what we shall later call “resistances” may articulate themselves in a *kathak* task in the commonly shared cognitive context of teacher and students in France. Thus, the milieu understood as the operative interdisciplinary space of transmission is considered as a necessary condition of a dynamic disciplinary teaching, which neither dilutes its meaning nor neglects the “teacher-student” action essential for the assimilation of this “alien” discipline. In dance studies the teacher hailing from a different context needs to discuss issues of cultural differences and develop specific pedagogical strategies engaging the students’ embodied knowledge as a research tool in both historical and cross-cultural investigation (Albright 2003).

To generate teacher-student exchange, the *kathak* milieu cannot be limited to the purely epistemic and resistant interdisciplinary objects; it must necessarily mobilize known objects pertaining to students’ common and usual repertory. Moreover, at the beginning of this process, knowledge resulting from the usual experiments on body mobility is necessarily implied because this knowledge partly constitutes the background of the teaching program for *kathak*. Consider a specific dance sequence entitled “offering flowers.” When asked to offer a few flowers to the partner, French students tend to use scissors to snip flowers and offer a bouquet, while Indian students automatically pick flowers by their fingers, tying them in such a way that it forms a garland with which they adorn the partner’s neck! Not only the gestures related to the object offered are different but also the contents, which are familiar to them due to geographical, social, and climatic contexts: the French students immediately think of tulips or roses, while the Indians depict jasmine or lotus. Similarly, another example is the portrayal of “a lady’s make up/dress up session,” which could also vary tremendously as French and Indians do not have the same style and use of objects. Indian students would tend to represent their character by automatically copying known cultural and social gestures like placing the dot “tikka or bindi” on the forehead, applying “kohl” on the eyes, combing their long hair to form a plait, wearing a whole set of jewellery (earrings, nose rings, bangles, necklace, anklebells, etc.), adorning themselves with typical drapery (sari), and admiring their beauty on a imaginary mirror. The demonstration by French students is strikingly different, however, because they represent the “make-up” part by imitating their socially and culturally familiar codes like powdering their nose, applying some lipstick, eye shadow, and blush, using a brush instead of a comb to tidy their short hair, and adorning practically no accessories like jewellery (but handbags, hat, and sunglasses appear sometimes); to represent “dressing-up,” they use a completely different dress code (skirts, buttoned shirt, coat, stockings, shoes etc). Apart from their narrative demonstration of intercultural variables, both representations bring to the limelight the interdisciplinary references, which also add to this distance between various activities in everyday life in different cultural contexts and which we

must consider rather obscure when viewed through the lens of disciplinary scholarship on methodology and education (which we must take into consideration rather than ignore). We are concerned with the conversion of “quotidian movement” into “aesthetic movement” in a specific interdisciplinary space: the “milieu.”

Teaching *kathak* in this manner is also a question of being aware of two types of objects present in a milieu: (1) the directly usable objects, on which students can exert their actions while allowing the concerted exchange with the teacher; and (2) the indirectly applicable objects, which oppose their actions and modify the use of the body in its expressive and communicative capacity. For example, the action of “carrying water” is a common gesture based on known situations, but when this becomes scenic, it requires another significance because pretending to carry an absent container (empty or full) involves the demonstration of a “state of mind” or a “movement of labor” in the action of carrying. The *kathak* discipline stylizes this action according to its own codes, with a whole series of symbolic systems (the use of both hands in the action implies the carried object’s weight), body displacement combined with facial expressions (a rhythmic step with a smile on the face means joy, staggering gait with a frowning expression means tiredness). Up to what point does the interdisciplinary space, designed and organized for teaching in France, inspire itself by the codified milieu of *kathak* in India? It must be noted here that in its original context, the daily actions (quotidian) used for the scenic representation are converted into dance movements (aesthetic) thanks to the prescribed “theatrical techniques” (*Natya dharmi*), which are distinct from the daily techniques (*Loka dharmi*) (Ghosh 1956/1967).

Methodology

This study is rooted in a didactic engineering research work intended to develop in French students the capacity to link narrative significances (stories, tales, symbols) and body techniques (play of body language and mobile forms), which are the two characteristics of *kathak* (Ranganathan 2004). The teaching of the dance took place in an Indo-French cultural center (*association*) whose purpose is to expose its members to the cultural life of India and its practices. The students were mainly young people unaccustomed to Indian dance. The teacher, a specialist in *kathak* (professional dancer, choreographer, and teacher academically trained in India) was also a collaborator in this engineering, whose effects were controlled by the tools of didactic research. The study covered a period of over one year of teaching, with three hours of lessons per week. The evolution of the practice was observed throughout the forty lessons (120 hours) and the teacher-student interactions jotted down and meticulously described (Ranganathan 2004). In our case, we isolated just one sequence of teaching located in the middle of the course. It highlights a popular episode, traditionally represented in *kathak* dance and during which significant transformations are observed in the French students. The sequence consists in depicting a mythological episode with the use of mime and gestural movements; at a later stage the episode is danced to lyrics: “*On the banks of river yamuna, accompanied by Krishna, with soft breeze blowing, crystal water flowing, Radha walks down gently, fetching water so delicately.*”

An “a Priori Analysis” of a Sequence in the Discipline of *Kathak*

Before we begin the study of the dance sequence, we will define the function “a priori analysis.” The “a priori analysis” is a specificity aspect of the didactic approach that takes into consideration what content knowledge is intended to be taught and learned, not only to call attention to the importance of the structure of the task but to anticipate the possible trajectories of student learning (Amade-Escot and O’Sullivan 2007). In the play of *kathak* language, the dancers represent a precise character (for example, Radha or Krishna, according to their social status and gender), the surrounding environment (for example, the banks of the river Yamuna), and various actions with simultaneous or sequential application of different emotions to be depicted. Throughout the sequence one must keep the ultimate aim in mind, which is the effective transfer of expressive feelings to the audience. Let us specify here that the discipline of *kathak* consists of two forms of dance: pure and technical (*Nrtta*) and expressive (*Nrtya*) (Ghosh 1992). These two forms have two types of codified gestures: simple gestures (*Asamyukta hastas*) illustrated with only one hand and complex gestures (*Samyukta hastas*) illustrated with both hands. These gestures have two interpretative versions and two meanings. In the first version (direct gesture), the meaning is evoked directly by the production of the gesture; for example, to describe a wounded animal, one can show the animal (lion, elephant, cow) with the precise gesture symbolizing it and, at the

Photo 1. Krishna–Radha on the banks of river Yamuna.

the same time, stumble or walk with staggering steps to represent the state of being wounded. In the second version (indirect gesture), the significance is identified through a combination of gestures and attitudes related to a specific emotion, for example, the animal’s wound is represented by a caressing gesture evoking compassion or consolation. In this sequence, Radha, Krishna’s young wife, fetches water from the river Yamuna (Photo 1). The dancer can introduce the scene of being at the edge of water by observing the water’s movement and assessing its quality. The water’s flow can be symbolized by the use of a gesture corresponding to movement (fast, slow, agitated), and the water’s quality can be shown through codified gestures signifying the degree of its clarity (clear, crystalline, unhealthy). In India, the teaching of

such a sequence starts with initiation of a whole set of codes and continues over a long span of time. Thus, Indian students have time to learn and understand the use of the symbolic and codified systems, and over time they develop the skills necessary to associate or dissociate these gestures appropriately.

Observations

Contrary to traditional Indian pedagogy, we reverse the process of academic transmission in that we begin with the spontaneous production of gestures and mimicry from students' own cultural disciplinary codes, and we end with the institutionalization of the technical and symbolic codes of the dance to be learned. Here we make it a point to specify that the results described below do not result from an application of a prescriptive rule that the Indian professor "must" follow an interdisciplinary context. Yet, without this experimentation certain ingenious conditions of interdisciplinarity would remain unknown. Three prominent stages emerge that define the interdisciplinary space as a place where the disciplinary codes of the *kathak* interact and intersect the quotidian expression with which French students are familiar.

Assimilation of the Codes of *Kathak* Discipline: Prevalence of the Familiar Codes

At the beginning of the course the students are asked to present their version of the account entitled "fetching water from a river." The task consists in personifying two young characters (the heroine Radha and hero Krishna) according to distinctive features of their social status, giving a mutual account of their interaction and their behavior at the edge of the river collecting water. Students present this scene in their own personalized way, expressing themselves with a degree of gestural freedom and mode of interpretation. The observations show that the majority of the students approach the situation by limiting their actions to that of "carrying water." The familiar processes generally used relate to distal body areas: for example, the action of carrying implying the hands and not the bust, thus demonstrating an expression of rigidity and uncertainty, which is not very compatible with the fluid expression expected from a *kathak* dancer. In addition, these spontaneous processes present a sociocultural distance regarding the Indian practices. For example, French students tend to fetch water by opening the tap (rather than drawing out water from a well or from a river), and they carry water with a bucket held firmly in the hand, rather than in a pot placed on top of the head or the hip (Photo 2).

If, at first sight, the above situation seems very free and unregulated, the initial interdisciplinary space is nevertheless structured with external objects, materials, and symbolic systems in order to generate a certain atmosphere (musical melody, incense, typical draped attire) and to inspire rhythmic movements (anklebells, cymbals, wooden sticks, percussion). The teacher physically withdraws herself from this milieu (to observe students' production), refrains from intervening didactically, and places herself beside students simply to comment on their actions. Her comments could include, for example: "Ah! there, you're carrying water which is weighing you down for the distance that you have to cover"; "your walk is getting cumbersome and your face is wearing a troubled expression"; "here, you're

Photo 2 (a). Malini carrying an empty pot.
Photo by Divya Ranganathan.

Photo 2 (b). Malini carrying a heavy pot on top of her head. Photo by Divya Ranganathan.

changing the bucket from your right hand to the left”; “now you’re wavering with its weight”; “and finally you’ve put the bucket down on the ground with all your force.” The teacher analyzes students’ mannerisms and the way they execute the action of carrying weight, which is different in everyday life (operational, involving effort) and in a dance sequence (aesthetic, rendered with elegance).

The situation “on the banks of a river” thus appears, at this first stage, like a learning game that is applied in a specific but “common cognitive context” (Sensevy 2007; Loquet 2007), which is partly in alliance and partly in contrast with students’ disciplinary abilities. In the following part of our study we will discuss the theoretical importance of common cognitive context and the need for this notion to become operational at this particular stage. That is why we say that the disciplinary codes of *kathak* are to an extent assimilated by the French students but also require an adaptation because those who only use their own daily cultural references (oblivious to *kathak* codes) to depict and illustrate a mythological story have difficulties in rendering their version as a comprehensible dance narrative on stage. Even though students’ usual processes are not completely appropriate for the scenic demonstration, and are not rightly understood by the audience, they are at the same time necessary at the outset as *the starting point of an interaction in an interdisciplinary space*. Thus, in this first stage of contact the milieu, which is seemingly familiar to the students, leads to their awareness of the need for widening and enriching their existing spontaneous body language into a more eloquent gestural performance.

Encoding the Discipline of *Kathak*: Interference with the Familiar Codes

With this second stage, the teacher works on the bonds of equivalence between one action and its symbolic significance (as we saw in the example about the animal, where caress means consolation) using the codes of *kathak*. The task consists in recalling the following scenario, made up of three scenes:

- a) The character played by students walks with a rhythmic and light step while carrying an empty pot on the hip;
- b) she approaches the river by admiring the clear water's flow (eyes expressing the beauty of water and hands describing its movement);
- c) finally, she fills the pot with this water and sets out again carrying the heavy pot full of water on her head.

Thus, they must give an account of a more complex reality, where not only is an action of a dual nature introduced—with a concrete material object (a pot) and a mutable object (water)—but also a *reaction* depicting the characters' feelings (joy, burden) and the environment (outdoor, natural elements, sound, sight) based on the progressive course of the story.

Let us now specify a new characteristic of the situation: the training is facilitated by an alternation between what we call a-didactic moments—during which the teacher refrains from teaching the academic codes directly because the milieu is a sufficient influence on the students—and of didactic moments—where the teacher shows the code and makes students repeat its necessary technical procedures. The teacher's observation concerns the following actions: (1) carrying water by representing a pot firmly fixed on the head or well positioned on the hip; (2) walking with (or without) the water's weight by distinguishing the gait in dance according to the weight and positioning of the pot; (3) imagining an amorous encounter by underlining the importance of typically Indian social attitudes connected to gender—a man is represented as virile and woman as shy—or class—a rich person is dressed with jewellery and accessories while a poor person is dressed in simple attire. At this stage, the milieu is reorganized to guide the students in their presentations.

In this interdisciplinary space, the introduction of lyrical poetry appears as a very useful tool helping us to determine the meaning of words through the poetic text and to create the right atmosphere through the melody or *raga*. To complement these tools, Indian costumes and engravings of Indian mythology are used to clarify the historical context. The typical attitudes of *kathak* inspired by mythology introduce key features that lend precision and refine details. Specific characteristics of the various characters give life to the account and become impossible to circumvent for pupils in view of an effective narration. The teacher remains sensitive to students' production of gestural, facial, body, and rhythmic coordination, and she controls the conversion of these gestures into expressive dance. These actions are produced several times by each student in order to incorporate the expressive codes recommended by this dance, including facial expressions, mobility of

the eyes, neck movements, expressive participation of arms and hands, body orientation on stage, lower limb positions, and striking of feet.

We notice that this second stage is a long and continuous process of construction, but thanks to the codes (gestures and face), students' movement becomes increasingly eloquent to external viewers. The teacher carefully controls these alternations between a-didactic and didactic moments. She introduces the formal rule to obtain expected results (didactic moment) only after observing initial responses coming from students (a-didactic moment). Thus, gradually the codes of *kathak* are constructed in the mind and body of French students; they are introduced to very demanding field but also exposed to a high degree of individual creativity.

Institutionalization of the Disciplinary Codes: Integration of Familiar Codes

At this third stage a teacher aiming at institutionalizing the discipline of *kathak* can now attain her objective of transmitting the original technical codes. However, the detailed analysis given throughout the teaching shows that these interventions are not limited to this ultimate stage—that is, with the final recital that is the traditional culmination of artistic teaching. We can note the progressive appearance of elements of institutionalization, from the very emergence of students' spontaneous answers at the first stage and the progressive connection of expressive elements, to the short episodes of the academic history of *kathak*. This last consists in typical traditional historical epics and treatises used as references, which contain the technical grammar of symbolic gestures and of facial language, information on mythology (the aesthetic characteristics of legendary heroes and heroines like Krishna and Radha, Rama and Sita, Shiva and Parvati), and theoretical support documents. We have thus shown that the disciplinary construction is presented in the form of a temporal process through a set of alternations between didactic and a-didactic moments. But this process would not suffice if the teacher did not introduce these rules and objects (Photo 3). She ensures the students at all stages that their produc-

Photo 3. Students with teacher, listening to the sound of the water. Photo by Divya Ranganathan.

tive activity is linked to a legitimate knowledge in and of another culture. The skill in this discipline and the original contents of *kathak* knowledge are adjusted progressively only to become successively more precise, thus reinforcing the teaching contents by the end of the course. However, the changes observed in the students do not result from a simple copying of behaviors and academic codes. *It is all about an original reconstruction or a didactic transposition, which can be recognized through the signs of interdisciplinary links in education between codes of kathak and codes related to the students' culture.*

Conclusion

This study accounts for the characteristics of an artistic teaching, which transmits disciplinary knowledge alien to the usual culture of students. The difficulties generated by the use of the body in *kathak*, the complexity of the narrative accounts to be evoked, and the cultural distance in the codes of expression could be considered as stages in the training process for unaccustomed students that the new teaching protocol tries to surmount. Our attention is focused on the teacher's capacity to build and manage a milieu and on her dual competency of being able to share the responsibilities with the students with regard to the knowledge being transmitted. In the current writings on teaching pedagogy, these competencies are usually reduced to the level of personal and psychological qualities of the teacher or to routinely acquired experience. It seems important to us, in a delicate interdisciplinary context, to highlight the teacher's competencies to build a unique artistic and didactic space with Indian and French references.

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