



SELF-STUDYING IN DANCE

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What is an efficient method of learning a high-difficulty level dance as a beginner in the genre?

INTRODUCTION

The general purpose and significance of my study is to find popular study practices among students and create a method of learning dance for beginners in all styles. My goal is to take these methods of learning, regardless of their intended subject, and create a flexible template for dance practice sessions, to help a person learn efficiently, effectively, and in their most preferred manner. For my own conducted research, I have decided to use human participants to be weekly surveyed. First, I will design a method I think would work at the start, and then test it on myself (measuring learning speed in hours and enjoyment in a rating from 1-5, 5 needing no change regarding enjoyment).

After I test on myself and make any changes, I will have 10 student participants keep a 7-day journal, using my method as they practice a dance and send it back to me after a week is over so I can write down advice and features that went well or could be improved. Then, I will continue to redesign the method and restart the cycle for about 3 months, where I will select the best-working version of the method as my final product.

BACKGROUND

Dance is a profession and hobby that is enjoyed worldwide, through culture, technique, and many different histories. It is an art that many use to express themselves, using their bodies as language. As a dancer myself, I understand that while many want to explore their interests in dance and start a journey, they have no idea where to start or give up from lack of progress. I understand this feeling when I started my journey a few months ago to learn K-Pop/Hip-hop style dance, and I decided to conduct this research to find a way to set a path for new learners, or just dancers in general, who want to continue to improve their moves.

Currently, short tips and tricks given by professional dancers are known about improving dance, and many articles, like the article "What is K-pop? History and Easy Tips to Learn K-Pop Moves" by Shelly A on Steezy, cover those kinds of tips. For example, the article has a section named "Easy Tips to learn K-Pop Choreography Faster" (Steezy 2024), which is intended to provide helpful ideas and advice by a more experienced dancer or choreographer. Although this does come in handy, many beginners don't know where to begin to even make these tips useful, so I am researching to build a method that works for beginners to learn choreography and self-critique on their own, because many start off without classes or instructors. Creating this "method", however, will be a relatively difficult task, since everyone has their own preferences to studying and learning. This can be studied more in the article, "Learning Styles" by Sarvenaz Hatami, where Hatami says, "Individuals have different learning styles, that is, they differ in their 'natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (Hatami 2012). Therefore, I will have to find a way to make the method as flexible as possible, while still holding some structure to give a clear outline of a dancer's journey.

Keeping these "learning preferences" in mind, I searched for a few articles that tied the VARK learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, Kinetic) to different art forms, like dance. In my search, I found a short post on the official VARK Test website by Carol Cadigan, called "Multimodal Strategies in the Arts". There it displays a chart that has different tips on using VARK in subjects like music, dance, art, and drama. For the Dance portion of the graphic, the tips included, "Draw symbols and diagrams to represent dance moves" for Visual, "Listen to instructors and use sound and music to interpret dance sequences" for Auditory, "Write notes in your own words to help you remember a choreographed dance" for Reading/Writing, and "Watch demonstrations of dance combinations and practice alongside the instructor" for Kinesthetic (Cadigan 2024). These tips were more flexible, but again, not a method. I will fill this gap of plain advice in the dance industry by designing a method that beginners can use fluently and confidently.

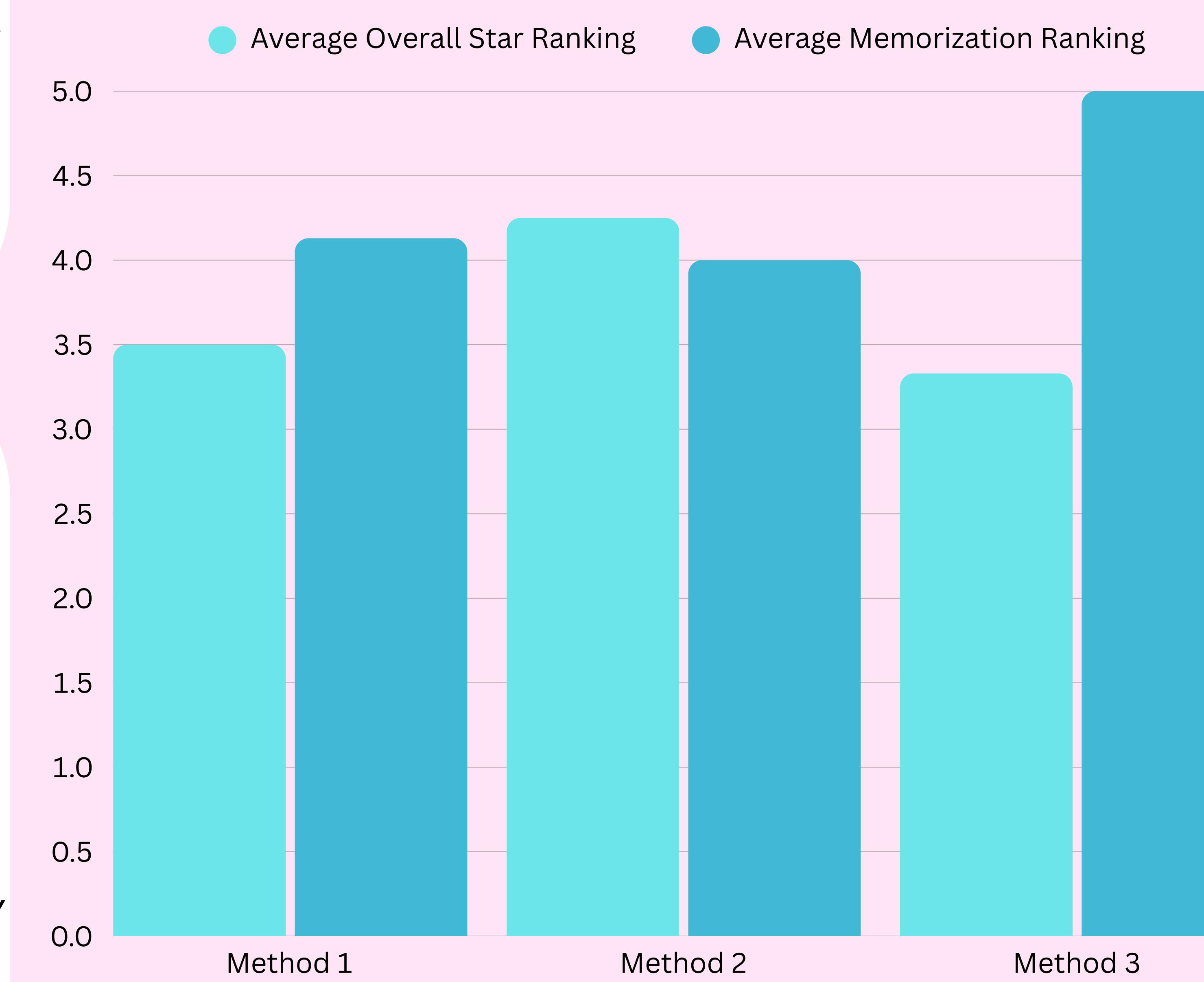
METHODOLOGY

The overall procedure should take about 12 weeks, every two being a "round". I will start with one week of building/revising a method and testing on myself. I predict that in this week, about 4 days will be used to build and revise, and the next 3 days will be spent testing the method on myself and revising again. The second week will be data collection, where I have participants learn similar choreography using my method and keep a dance journal (I will probably use a program like OneNote or Microsoft Forms) for the week, writing down anything complications, enjoyments, and other thoughts about the method. Along with that, when they start the journal, they will rate themselves 1-5 on professionalism (1 for beginner, 5 for professional), and every day they would answer other factors, like practice room size, if they practiced earlier that day, if they practiced with others, and the time that they started and ended.

Of course, the participants will be informed of this data collection through a consent form that they must sign to be involved in the research. After I receive data and thoughts about the method, I will read over what stuck out the most and revise my method. This will last for a total of 6 rounds, or 12 weeks, and then I will select the method that seemed to work the best for my final product. For my personal use, I will keep a video log of my practices as I test the method on myself.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, I found that the highest rankings were in the 2nd method, with the 1st method as a runner-up. This means that using more time for visual learning, and then repeating each move can provide efficient learning to new dancers. However, there is a catch to this study. Because it was conducted on myself, I plan to extend the study further to different participants, so I can receive external feedback on how to improve my method. Again, some things to consider may be that I was too lenient on my rankings, and that not all of the data can be defined as accurate or credible because it was a single opinion and no quantitative evidence.



References

Steezy. (23 Jan 2024). What is K-Pop? History and Easy Tips to Learn K-Pop Moves. Steezy.com. <https://www.steezy.co/posts/what-is-k-pop>.

Hatami, S. (8 Dec 2012). Learning Styles. Key Concepts in ELT. <https://academic.oup.com/eltj/article/67/4/488/485178>.

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FUTURE RESEARCH

My plans for future research are to involve other participants. In the original methodology, I wanted to use a group of people with different levels of experience in dance, but that plan failed. So, I hope to use the time next year to reconduct the study in the original plan.