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Engendering meaning within the high school experience: A consideration of movement and dance

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Engendering Meaning within the High School Experience: A Consideration of Movement and
Dance

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Dissertation submitted to the
College of Human Resources and Education
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Curriculum and Instruction

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Abstract

Dance, movement, and kinesthetic learning are among the most powerful ways in coming to know, yet they are amid the most ignored processes at the high school level. Dance has the power to change lives as it offers aesthetic ways of viewing and connecting with the world through its creative, reflective, and imaginative embodied experiences. I have observed these valuable outcomes and address the nature and power of them with the following questions: 1) How has dance and movement influenced my journey? 2) How has this influence affected the high school experience of my students? The heuristic method of qualitative research is utilized to analyze data such as my personal narrative and reflections, observations, and analysis of existing lessons plans, scope and sequence descriptions, assignments, assessments, and existing student work. The data supports a clear evolution of my definition of dance, the design and implementation of its curriculum, and the valuable experiences of my students. Through this research it is evident that dance engenders meaning in dynamic ways at the high school level and that experiences like those offered through dance education play an integral part in meeting the needs of the 21st century and the Conceptual Age.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A Broad Perspective

We exist in a world of movement and motion where in our most natural state we are involved in constant activity. Given this natural tendency toward movement, I am conflicted as I have dedicated myself to a profession in which movement is illogically absent. I have come to realize that as we enter into the education system we are told to conform and become good inactive listeners, which Paulo Freire (1970) has referred to as “banking education” and Phil Jackson (1968) eloquently writes about in *Life in Classrooms*. We are trained to think that authentic and valuable learning only occurs from the neck up and that the purpose of movement is merely to transport our heads (Robinson, 2001). Learning through movement is the mostly ignored. Ironically, it has the power to open students up to a much more valuable learning experience that will lead to a more fulfilling and successful journey of life. Jerome Bruner (1979) wrote that learning in one area opens learning in others; an idea furthered by Eleanor Duckworth when she writes that teachers are learners first. This joyous learning is tempered by the behaviorally motivated notion of teaching and learning.

Every action we carry out is a dance, we are just not acutely aware of it. Dance is a nonverbal means of communication and expression. As children our play is a form of dance as are our interactions with peers and adults alike. As adolescents the dance continues in the forms of involvement in hobbies and as rebellion to authority. Into early adulthood the human journey is a series of performances from relationships, work, and study. As adults the performances only grow more frequent and varied from work and the raising of children to caring for parents and practicing faith. Our human experiences are lived through movement and artistically expressed

through dance whether we categorize it as art or not. An issue that exists is that much of art is not recognized or considered such unless it is housed in an official building or space (Dewey, 1958, p. 4). Therefore much of the movement carried out in society is not deemed artistically significant or a valuable component of life's journey including that which exists in schools. Ideas about and understanding of the presence of meaningful movement and its existence in schools must be questioned and reevaluated.

For the purpose of this dissertation I define meaningful movement as motion of the body that represents or communicates an interpretation of an idea, theme, event, object, or piece of work. I also contend that there is a distinct difference between dance training and dance education; the former being physical movements across all dance genres performed to music and the latter I define as a phenomenon that involves movement principles based on all genres of dance and includes but is not limited to historical and cultural components, creative, analytical, and reflective processes, the formation of meaning and meaningful connections across disciplines, and the promotion of imaginative and creative problem solving. Without constant reflection on our practices and ideas as teachers no changes will be made and the curriculum our students experience will remain stagnant, sedentary, and insufficient to accommodate our societal needs. I know this because I have recently experienced a disconnect between teaching and learning. It is imperative that we consider meaningful movement in the classroom and develop consciousness about the important outcomes of movement in order to ensure optimal success for our children in the 21st century. Throughout this dissertation I will explain how I have discovered valuable meaning in and through movement as I consider how dance has influence my journey as both a dancer and dance educator and how this has influenced the experiences of my students. Through reflection, exploration, and investigation I will explain the

phenomena of movement and dance in my life and how my experiences relate to curriculum and have affected the lives of high school students.

As teachers I believe it is our duty to provide and prepare our students for a happy and fulfilling life. Currently, education has become an act of depositing, filling containers with knowledge (Freire, 1970, p. 53). Schools focus heavily on incremental instead of holistic learning. However, the task of preparing our children for satisfying lives is accomplished by allowing them to be creative and imaginative in their thinking. It is paramount to encourage our students to be problem solvers and innovative thinkers who recognize the connections within their lives, the beauty of life itself, and are free. I have come to understand dance has the capacity to do just that. Dance curriculum suggests a way out of the apparent obsession with control and prediction of outcomes in school practice (Pinar, 1995, p. 604). Additionally, the frequency of kinesthetic flow is related to traits like feeling happy, satisfied, free, and in control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 156). These are traits that are more important than facts dispensed to sedentary beings sitting in a row of desks where success is measured by the ability to answer simple yes, no, or single answer questions that require no reflection or thought. Additionally the focus on the “basics” or the 3 R’s has created an unbalanced curriculum that has in turn weakened the quality of our nation’s education (Eisner, 1978).

The Human Journey Expressed Through Movement

An awareness of movement in schools and society is critical to the quality of life we experience. This issue deals with aesthetics and aesthetic questioning. Aesthetic questioning prompts personal definitions of goodness and beauty as well as empathy. These reflective practices are critical components of curriculum and are addressed through movement and dance

in education. Without dance in schools, students will never fully develop these very personal definitions and reflections that define them as individual citizens within a culture. Current education systems are neglecting the welfare of students by not allowing them to fully experience their natural state of movement and the invaluable lessons it can teach. Nor are many individuals aware of how dance has the potential to influence social, cultural, and global aspects, including the powerful notion of empathy frequently addressed by Maxine Greene, renowned educational philosopher and theorist. When the arts are not part of your own life it is hard to know what they can contribute to it or to the lives of others (Eisner, 1999).

Dance has the capacity to free from oppression not only the mind, but the body and the spirit. We as humans should feel free to express our inner soul without hindrance. Our spheres of movement become so controlled throughout the courses of our lives. Our bodies become alienated depending on our work (Boal, 1985, p. 127). We seem to become out of touch with ourselves. Greene supports this idea and the importance of each individual becoming liberated so as to transform his or her reality, to become aware of his or her encounters of what it means to be present in the world (Greene, 1978, p. 209). We must work to create a space in our schools and in our communities to promote the development of consciousness, freedom from bodily oppression, the notion that movement and dance are a valuable and necessary component in our schools' curricula for the future success of our children. In this dissertation I will investigate my personal relationship with dance and its changes over time by comparing data from my personal narrative, lesson plans, various documents such as programs and letters, existing assignments, assessment, and student work, and observation work with another dance instructor. Through these means I hope to understand how movement and dance have influenced my journey and how this influence has affected my high school students.

In the upcoming chapters I will reflect upon my teaching career and explore and explain how I have come to understand dance as much more than physical movement to a musical selection. Dance is one of the most powerful ways in coming to know yet at the same time one of the most ignored processes. Movement has the power to change lives. I have experienced it personally and witnessed it in my students. I have developed a deep appreciation for movement and its importance in the human journey. Not until I began teaching dance as a fine art elective at the high school level did I realize it is much more than just art. It is the flow of life's journey. It is a way of knowing. Movement and flow are important to be wide-awake in your life. Flow is the holistic sensation people feel when they act with total involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 36). Movement is necessary for total commitment and feeling, for empathy and creative ways of knowing. Kinesthetic learning is the most organic of teaching methods and is essential to form connections. By excluding our children from this notion we are failing as educators. It is easy for teachers to play their roles and do their jobs without serious consideration of the good and the right (Greene, 1978, p. 46). By good and right I believe Greene refers to teachers' awareness of positive and valuable behaviors and knowledge and how this contradicts with their delivery in the classroom. Many have fallen under the false sense of security provided by texts and workbooks. Teachers must change so children will. How children see things depends on what we show them. If where you put your mind your body follows, then can we change the minds of hesitant teachers by moving their bodies?

My Personal Journey Expressed Through Movement

For the first three years of my life my movement was consistent with the normal maneuverings of any toddler. However at the age of three I was introduced to a more specific

style of movement, ballet. I do not remember a lot about my start in dance. The earliest I can recall begins at the age of five, prior to that I depend on my parents' stories and home videos. From the ages of five to seventeen I studied dance avidly, like other American girls. I attended ballet, jazz, and tap classes all through school age several nights each week. There was a strict pattern to this training. Each class began with a warm-up and stretch, followed by barre work or traveling patterns across the floor, culminating in some sort of combination. Every class was the same, very predictable. It was physically challenging but relatively mindless for the task was merely to mimic the instructor as precisely as physically possible, basically monkey see, monkey do. I came to be fairly proficient and enjoyed the physicality blended with the music. For years I can remember putting on shows in my bedroom at home in whatever costumes I could find lying around and feeling so much joy in the movement. I felt free. I would imagine I was one of New York City Ballet's prima ballerinas. I was in my glory at the end of the year dance recitals where my friends and I would perform combinations of various genres for an audience filled with boasting parents, each with a video camera in tow. I was satisfied with the state of dance and movement in my life. As I graduated high school I thought my days of dancing had come to an end, much like the rest of my friends who were heading off to college. However, my path would prove otherwise.

As I began my freshman year of college I was approached about directing the local high school dance ensemble. I would be responsible for auditioning the dancers, holding rehearsals, and producing two performances yearly. I had no idea at the time, but this would prove to be one of the primary steps leading to my current profession. I hesitantly but excitedly accepted the position. This was the first situation in which I was not the one performing, but the one designing the art for the stage. I faced many challenges and much frustration throughout my

freshman year in this task. However, at the end of the year I had gained an appreciation for the design and creation of dance, not merely the performance. I remained at this assignment for five years and within these five years I gained more applicable knowledge than I did at the university level in the classes of the teacher preparatory program of which I was a part. At this point in time I would love to have been able to say, "I am going to be a high school dance teacher in West Virginia." However, that position was nonexistent and my practical side arose as I prepared myself to once again say goodbye to my dancing career and enter into my position as a high school math and foreign language teacher.

I was appointed to my first teaching position in early August of that year. I remember being thrilled to have been selected by the principals and eager to begin my career as a teacher. My second year at the school I received a request from the principal asking me if I would be willing to teach a dance class. I remember the size of the smile on my face in response to the request. I of course replied positively and thus began my journey to understanding dance as meaningful movement. Through this point in my life dance was something fun, something for exercise, something I did well and enjoyed doing. Teaching the high school group during my college years helped me to develop a deeper appreciation for the physicality of dance and dance as embodied art in its development and presentation. The important task of teaching dance in the public high school setting would change my outlook, my entire life.

Howard Gardner's Influence

Howard Gardner has greatly influenced the work of many educators and curriculum in the United States. His notion of multiple intelligences has been embraced by the field of education and addresses the current push for differentiated instruction. In the early 1980's Gardner

proposed seven intelligences, seven areas in which students' personal interests and educational needs can be met, seven ways of understanding (Gardner, 1999). These intelligences provide varying perspectives on teaching and learning and include: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences are explained further in Appendix A.

The bodily-kinesthetic method promotes the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the capacity to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movement as connected events. Gardner's acknowledgement of this type of learning was innovative and persuaded teachers to begin to understand the important outcomes of children's movement and that learning can occur through such. Dance in schools addresses this very intelligence. Educators need to recognize the difficulties students face in attaining genuine understanding and meaning-making and consider the differences among minds (Gardner, 2000). Learning through movement is an important way to help bodily-kinesthetic learners to gain a deeper understanding of various concepts as it offers a new perspective. The challenge now is to take this teaching method from the bottom of the list, in terms of usage, and encourage teachers to incorporate more movement experiences in the classroom.

The Mind and the Body

Too often in schools the mind and the body are treated as unrelated parts. Because as students, children sit in desks all day, we promote learning only through the brain. This is detrimental to their learning experiences. All areas of the brain must work in an integrated way for the mind and the body to fully function, from birth to adult. Anne Green Gilbert has done extensive work in this field. She divides the brain into three parts, lower, mid-brain, and upper,

in her explanation of the importance of movement in learning (Gilbert, 2006). The lower brain regulates self-preservation. It is the unconscious or automatic brain that controls circulation, heart rate, respiration, sleep patterns, coordination, balance, muscle movements, and more. The mid-brain combines conscious and unconscious thought as Green refers to it as the emotional and social brain (Gilbert, 2006). The upper brain is the largest part of the brain and contributes to voluntary movement, creativity, problem solving, and verbal expression. Within the upper brain is the parietal lobe that handles proprioception, or the body's understanding of its place in space, in addition to touch, pressure, and pain (Gilbert, 2006). She (2006) describes:

Less and less time is being spent on low brain development. For example, many of our infant rearing practices are emphasizing early and out of sequence eye-hand and bipedal activities and less and less time is devoted to prone, supine, and quadrupedal development which stimulates the lower brain. Without fully developed automatic physical survival mechanisms, higher brain consciousness lacks a balanced grounding. (p. 7)

The mind-body connection is further supported through her explanation of the four opportunities for brain development, from conception to adult, detailed in Appendix B.

Significance of the Work

It has taken me years of teaching to understand and experience how students benefit and grow from the aesthetic experiences offered through movement and dance. Art cannot be separated from the human experience (Dewey, 1958, p. 1) and it consistently remains separate in both society and schools today. This separation is detrimental to our students as it is what shows

them what is important to us as adults (Eisner, 1998, p. 8). We as teachers are misleading our students to believe that life beyond the school doors is unrelated and divided. It is important that we become aware of this subliminal lesson and work to promote a curriculum better suited to prepare our children for life in the 21st century. As Eisner (1998) writes, “often it is what we do not teach that says more to our students than what we do teach” (p. 8).

What we are currently doing in schools is just not working. It does not fully prepare students for their futures. It is vital that the curriculum be changed to be more inclusive to what being human is. It is imperative to invite movement into the education scene. We cannot continue to educate our children and pretend to prepare them for life in the 21st century while we maintain the ideas and practices of the 20th.

Throughout the past centuries there have been strong progressions influencing individual success as well as global success. The 19th century boasted the Industrial Age with factories and its workers; The Information Age of the 20th century required knowledge workers; Now we have entered the 21st century, or the Conceptual Age (Pink, 2005). The Conceptual Age requires creators, meaning makers, and empathizers. It demands people with imaginative capacities and other characteristics possessed by right-brain thinkers. These characteristics blended with many others including intuitiveness and holistic notions lend themselves to the outcomes of the arts. Our education system must change to meet the new circumstances in which we live.

In most educational systems, the arts are not seen as sufficiently important to be at the heart of education, and it is taken for granted that this is the way things should be (Robinson, 2001). This may have sufficed during the Information Age, but now that we exist in an age that hungers for meaning, questioning, and empathy the arts need to be a compulsory part of

everyone's education. Pink stresses the influence of these changes in the economy and the fact that businesses are now in the market for creative thinkers, for right-brained people in place of left-brained workers. If the goal of schools is to prepare students for life after the K-12 experience why then is there such a disconnect between what the business world is in the market for and what curriculum addresses in schools?

West Virginia's state superintendent, Dr. Steven Paine, addresses this issue, as West Virginia is included in the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. This partnership, involving thirteen other states, is dedicated to reinvigorating learning to meet the demands of the 21st century by focusing on four key elements. You will find these elements explained in Appendix C. Together with this project and the support of Governor Joe Manchin, Dr. Paine stresses the importance of preparing our children for the 21st century while recognizing important aspects such as communication skills, problem-solving strategies, creativity and innovation; skills that are a product of arts education. These skills have been embedded in the curriculum through the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) beginning in the 2008-2009 school term.

The West Virginia Department of Education adopted the Global21 campaign in order to address the necessary skills mentioned formerly. Global21's goal is to encourage public education to keep pace with the dynamic changes taking place in our world. This promotion also announces the need to transform our ideas of curriculum to include lessons on determining what to do when you don't know what to do. Movement and the arts in schools address just that, the unexpected and the need to improvise and solve problems in the daily events of life. The Global21 campaign also provides resources for teachers, students, and parents in order to facilitate this necessary change in schools.

Ohio's Governor Ted Strickland expresses a similar mentality in his address on education and the need for change to address 21st century needs as he quotes, "Our schools must teach students to think past the limits of what has been done and imagine what can be done." This notion lines up directly with Maxine Greene's ideas about imagination and aesthetic education, evident in her writing and lectures at the Lincoln Center Institute for Aesthetics in Education. In addition, Governor Strickland has lined out six specific principles that need attention in the education system. One of these principles states that we must strive to develop a specific, personalized education program that identifies how each individual student learns and use the teaching methods appropriate to that student's needs and abilities. These notions of differentiated instruction are another aspect of education fulfilled by the arts in schools.

At the national level, the Kennedy Center jumped in line to fight for arts in education and its important place in 21st century schools with the development Changing Education through the Arts (CETA) and ArtsEdge. CETA provides teachers with opportunities to learn about the arts and ways to integrate the arts in their teaching through courses and workshops led by expert teaching artists and arts educators at the Kennedy Center. ArtsEdge was developed as a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment of the Arts, the United States Department of Education, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. It empowers teachers to teach in, through, and about the arts by providing tools to develop interdisciplinary curricula that fully integrates the arts with other academic subjects, again stressing to teachers the urgent message of including the arts in schools.

The art of dance has a special place in schools and it is no longer acceptable to consider dance as a part of physical education and limit movement in schools to such. Some may

consider the difference semantics, but, just because both require the use of our bodies, does not mean the outcomes are the same. It is critical that teachers and students alike recognize the difference between the sport and art of movement. We do not come out of a performance of Swan Lake asking who won (Robinson, 2001, p. 197). Dance, in both performance and practice, encourages creative and critical thinking and promotes questioning and the formation of relationships across disciplines that meets the needs of the Conceptual Age and the goals of Global 21. The classroom should be what it announces it is trying to foster. If the mission of schools is to prepare each individual student for life after school then we must value individuality. However, standardized tests, performance objectives, and focus on math, science, and reading lend themselves to conformity and standardization. Our view of learning is often shaped by what can be most easily measured without thought of perspective, experience, and personal definitions and solutions. Definitions of goodness and beauty are addressed through the aesthetic questioning experiences offered by dance in schools.

Maxine Greene suggests that we stay in the mythic stage of consciousness because it is easier to chant than to ask questions. So often when our views are challenged, instead of examining our own we attack theirs, avoiding examination of our personal beliefs (Eisner, 1979). Is this why dance and movement do not exist in our schools today? Do we continue teaching the “basics” because that is what we know and what can be tested? SAT and ACT exams deal with the student’s ability to apply rules successfully. The ability to create, invent, and problem solve does not seem to count. How do we approach this issue? The key part of any solution to any problem is to raise or evolve consciousness while realizing at the same time that it is necessary to create solutions that do not require the entire world to be in the same stage of consciousness (McIntosh, 2007).

Limitations

The personal level of awareness of each individual influences the acceptance of the notion of movement and dance in curriculum, the method and quality of implementation in the classroom, and the value placed on this mode of instruction. Teachers must be aware, conscious, and accepting of the positive contributions of meaningful movement. Also to consider, is that no one piece of art or experience is ever the same. Perspective, societal and personal situations, and experiences influence encounters with the arts. Therefore, throughout the findings of this study it is important to maintain the understanding that the students, teachers, and other persons involved, depending on their personal experiences, react differently to each encounter with art and dance no matter how frequent these encounters may be. Finally, variations of personal journeys of both teachers and students influence the implementation, acceptance, and participation within dance and movement encounters. We each are on our own personal life journeys and with that comes varying experiences, perspectives, and interactions which lead to the development of individual and personal definitions and values.

Dissertation Chapters

It is not the intent of this dissertation to offer solutions to the lack of movement in schools, but to explain through my experiences why its presence and meanings are essential in the high school learning experience. Chapter one of this dissertation provides a basic idea of the motivation and purpose behind the study. It addresses ideas of movement in our daily lives, its absence in schools, and possible causes for such, for example, awareness, personal journeys, and individual definitions of goodness influenced by experience. Chapter two mentions a brief history of arts education and its current state, dance as an integrated and individual subject, and

specific studies conducted about dance in education and how ideas about movement and aesthetics are necessary components of our education system as the specific positive and worthwhile outcomes are abundant. Chapter three explains the methodology I have chosen for this study and the rationale behind the chosen method. Chapter four offers artifacts and examples of data as I make sense of the experiences and provide evidence of change present throughout my journey. In chapter five I draw my conclusions, explain implications for high school learning experiences, and provide possible avenues for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Much research has been conducted on the arts and their influence on the education of our students. Whether focusing on academic, social, ethical, socioeconomic status (SES) aspects or other contributions of the arts, it is hard to argue against the existence and utilization of them in curriculum today. Even with the abundant literature and research supporting the arts, it is difficult to understand just why so much resistance is given to the arts if we as a nation are truly committed to improving the school systems of which our children are a part. I have personally struggled with the current oppressive nature of curriculum in schools. The structure of schools, classrooms, their schedules, and curriculum alike discourage the creative instincts of children, authentic exploration, and feelings of flow and joy. Philosophers, such as Maxine Greene and Elliot Eisner, and existing research support the idea that the arts provide these types of experiences and improve overall academic performance. In addition, studies prove that children engaged in the arts have increased test scores when compared to those students who have little or no involvement. These same students are also less likely to drop out of school and carry with them a higher level of self-confidence. In this chapter I will discuss more specifically the research that supports the arts in schools, early and current arts education in the United States, characteristics of a high quality dance program, and dance as an integrated subject. As I read, in connection with my personal experience, I am considering:

1. How has dance and movement influenced my journey?
2. How has this influence affected the high school experience of my students?

Early Education

During the last two decades of the 19th century, schools were transforming their roles into that of social agencies by taking on social and economic functions (Spring, 1997). School nurses and health programs, after-school and community activities, and playgrounds began to emerge during this span of time. The concern for urban situations, including poverty and delinquency, influenced schools to emphasize improving urban life and living. Soon to follow this challenge was the installment of public kindergartens (Spring, 1997). Based on the beliefs of the creator of kindergarten, a German by the name of Friedrich Froebel who started his program in Germany in 1837, the implementation of kindergarten in public schools was to “bring forth their (the students’) divine spirits and create a sense of unity among all humans” (Spring, 1997, p. 200). Additionally, Froebel felt that play was the highest phase of child development (Rippa, 1984). Henry Curtis’ ideas about play followed shortly thereafter in 1917 with the play movement. Curtis was the organizer of the Playground and Recreation Association in the United States. He believed that “children need fresh air and the opportunity to exercise their bodies to avoid the rapid increase of insanity and the growing instability of the nervous system” (Spring, 1997, p. 202). His ideas about movement and its importance conflicts strongly to what New York City architect Snyder was working on in the design of the ‘standardized classroom.’

Snyder developed a plan for the standardized classroom in the first half of the 20th century. His idea was to bolt rows of desks to the floor. His plan was carried out across the nation in places like New York City, Denver, and Washington, D.C. After the execution of his design, less than 20% of desks in public schools remained non-stationary (Spring, 1997, p. 208). This suggests that the majority of classrooms allowed for little to no student movement. John Dewey did not approve of the ‘standard American classroom’ (Spring, 1997) as he valued the spirit of freedom and mutual respect in the learning process (Rippa, 1984). However Snyder’s

design did match the beliefs of stimulus-response, drill, reward, and knowledge of discrete facts belonging to E.L. Thorndike. Thorndike's doctrine of connectionism, where learning was viewed as forming a series of connections between stimulus-response, dominated in the education field for over fifty years (Spring, 1997). Thorndike's ideas were supported by Arthur Best.

In 1952, Best delivered a paper announcing his opinion that curricula should be organized around traditional subject matter and in 1956 developed the Council for Basic Education (Spring, 1997). His influence continued and grew with the launching of the world's first orbiting satellite, Sputnik, by the Soviet Union in 1957, and President Eisenhower's speech in 1958 influencing the power of the previously established National Science Foundation (NSF) and the creation of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The NSF was developed in 1950 as a tax-supported, federal agency to promote education and basic research in the sciences. The NDEA was created in 1958 to support research and innovation in science, math, and foreign languages. Also during the fifties began the accountability movement (Spring, 1997). This movement spread into the early seventies when states and local communities began to require schools to publish achievement test scores annually (Spring, 1997). These achievement and intelligence tests given in schools were born of the Stanford-Binet test administered in 1916 to millions of soldiers during World War I (Pulliam, 1982). Along with a heightened focus on standardized tests came an emphasis on behaviorism. Higher standards for graduation, competency tests, and statewide academic tests are a low cost means used in attempt to increase student learning.

Surveys and tests over a span of fifteen years led to the publication of “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform” in 1983 by President Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. Professing the failure of American schools, the report also made recommendations on the improvement of schools including credit requirements, time spent in schools, effective and qualified teachers, better addressing the needs of minority, handicapped, and socioeconomically disadvantaged children. The enactment of Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994 officially identified the arts as part of the core curriculum by federal policy. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reaffirmed the arts as core academic subjects into the 21st century. However, many reports have been mixed and claim a decrease in the frequency of arts instruction in schools as a result of residing at the bottom of the hierarchy of core academic subjects. Frequency of arts in schools was and continues to be largely shaped by local circumstance and insufficient distribution of funds.

Why Arts in Schools?

The arts have multiple benefits for students despite their sparseness in the curriculum. Students with learning experiences in the arts reap benefits in three main areas; academic, basic, and comprehensive (Ruppert, 2006). Academic benefits include test scores, classroom performance and participation, and other traditional indicators of success. Basic benefits include thinking and social skills as well as confidence and motivation. Comprehensive benefits of the arts involve influences on the school environment. Numerous studies have been conducted across the United States that support the findings in Ruppert’s report.

The Imagination Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, conducted in 1998 within the Chicago Public School District, concluded that elementary students who attended

schools in which arts were integrated with classroom curriculum outperformed their peers in math who did not have an arts-integrated curriculum. The study reported that 60% of those students who took the math portion of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills tested at or above grade level in the math portion while only 40% of students who attended schools without arts integration performed at the same level. The arts have also proven to narrow the achievement gap between low and high SES students studied by the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California in their study entitled, “Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts.” They found that twelfth grade low SES, high arts-involved students nearly close the gap between high SES, low arts-involved students in reading proficiency at the same grade level, reaching levels of proficiency of 37.9% and 42.9% respectively. These findings support Ruppert’s academic benefits of the arts. Additionally, art participants’ SAT scores increased linearly in a 2005 study (Ruppert, 2006). Students with over four years of arts instruction outperformed those students with one-half of a year or less by 58 points on the verbal section and 38 points on the math section of the SAT (Ruppert, 2006).

Basic benefits of critical thinking and self-confidence have also been supported by several recent studies. “Learning In and Through the Arts: The Question of Transfer” published in 2002 by *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Students Academic and Social Development*, informs that 4th through 8th graders who reported a high level of instruction and participation in the arts showed higher levels of confidence about their own academics than did low arts students. This increase in confidence level may influence course selection, college entrance examination performance, and post-secondary plans. Young people who participate in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, three times more likely to win an award

for school attendance, and four times more likely to win an award for writing as well as being more likely to perform community service (Heath, 1998). More support for Ruppert's "basic benefits" idea comes from the "Artistic Talent Development for Urban Youth: The Promise and the Challenge" study conducted by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRCGT). These researchers discovered that the participation in music and dance instruction offered "an emotional safe haven from family turmoil" for underprivileged students. The NRCGT determined that the "skills and discipline students gained, the bonds they formed with peers and adults, and the rewards they received through instructing and performing helped most achieve success both in and outside of school."

The overall school environment also benefits from the presence of arts in their environment. The Teachers College at Columbia University's study, "Learning In and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications," confirms that students who received high levels of arts training are more cooperative and more willing to share ideas than their respective low-arts peers. Teachers in the study reported that high-arts students were better able to use their imaginations and take risks in learning. This risk-taking and sharing of ideas influences the learning environment of the classroom and the school. In addition, these students were reported to have a better rapport with the teachers and in turn these teachers in arts-rich school environments demonstrated more interest in their work and were more likely to become involved in professional development experiences. Also noted in the study was the higher frequency of teachers involved in arts-rich schools being innovative in their instruction. All of the mentioned contribute to the "comprehensive" benefits of arts in schools are mentioned by Ruppert.

Yet another reason to include the arts more in the curriculum is the 21st century skills they promote and encourage. Global21 is West Virginia's current attempt to address this issue. As mentioned in Chapter 1, we are entering into an age that requires creative thinkers and meaning makers, citizens who are innovative in their thinking processes. Stanford University and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published a study entitled, "Imaginative Actuality: Learning in the Arts During Nonschool Hours," that asserts that "people who learn the rigors of planning and production in the arts will be valuable employees in the idea-driven workplace of the future." This study also cites the SCANS 2000 report (The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) whose goal is to encourage a high-performance economy characterized by high-skill, high-wage employment. The SCANS report defined critical skills employees need for success as well as the importance of basic literacy skills, the ability to work on teams, to solve complex problems in systems, and understand and use technology. Alan Greenspan quotes, "The Congress finds that the arts are forms of understanding and ways of knowing that are fundamentally important to education." The arts can also attract students who have been pushed away from other opportunities for success in school (Catterall, 2005).

The benefits of student involvement in the arts are astounding. Once students engage in arts education, other educational options present themselves. It is important to ask how well the current curriculum is preparing our students for their futures. Eisner (1992) stated that:

Currently, curriculum as a whole is so heavily saturated with tasks and expectations that demand fealty and rule and is intellectually debilitating; Opportunities to think in unique ways are diminished; The lessons taught

by the arts are much closer to what successful and intelligent corporations do and to what cognitive psychologists are discovering constitute the most sophisticated forms of thinking. (p. 594)

These ideas support those mentioned by Pink and Robinson in the previous chapter. The arts are essential to curriculum. Arts education is not meant to create phenomenal, professional artists, but to encourage students to be more conscious of their lives and their environment, to be better problem solvers, and to function more successfully in society. We do not need more and better arts education to produce better artists but to produce better educated human beings who value and evolve a worthy civilization (Fowler, 1989). It is important to realize that all of the arts are essential to education, not just visual art and music. Specifically one of the four arts is grossly ignored in education, dance.

Why Dance in Schools?

Movement is basic to the human experience. Our bodies are our instruments and the biological foundation for cognitive processes. They are gateways that open a way to understand ourselves and our world through movement (Parviainen, 2002, p. 14). Yet most tend to avoid and dismiss this very natural mode of teaching and learning. We can no longer sit idly by and choose to ignore the most important process in the arriving of understanding. Children are active; children are different at the various stages of their growth (Greene, 1978).

Within the arts a hierarchy exists between the four areas of study. Visual arts occupy the top of this hierarchy followed by music, drama/theater, and last is dance. This idea is supported by a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in their 1997

“National Assessment for Educational Progress” as a reported 3% of the nation’s 8th graders received dance instruction three to four times weekly. For theater the comparable figure is 10%, music is 43% and visual arts is 52%. This notion of the arts hierarchy is also strongly supported by a comprehensive study conducted by the Appalachian Education Initiative as reported in the 2004-2005 State of the Arts Survey for West Virginia Public Schools. This study consisted of responses from many responsible in the state’s education system. Of those questioned were members of the curriculum administration (34.5%), members of the county level administration (23.6%), assistant superintendents (21.8%), arts educators (18.2%), and superintendents (1.8%). When respondents were asked how important dance is compared to other subjects 63.6% said it is not important while the same percent of those questioned (63.6%) believed that music is as important as other subjects and 60% believed that visual art is as important as well. It is evident that dance is the ‘step-sister’ of the arts from the information presented and the fact that the majority of dance experiences in schools, and until recently in the 1980’s some universities, are taught through physical education classes, not the fine arts (Nadel, 2003). This lack of value in the human body and its movement reinforces to students the belief that learning only occurs from the neck up.

As our world grows more globally connected we can turn to dance to perform important functions in both school and society. Dance encodes language, religion, and history and possesses a strong power to transcend prejudices, inequities, power struggles, and violence in an often profane world (Parviainen, 2002). Parviainen (2002) discusses “kinesthetic empathy” as the ability to both perceive and feel the motion of other lived bodies in their corporal schema. This notion and the notion that dance encodes various aspects of our world are both very powerful in their influence of individuals in society and their values and quality within it. Dance

and movement in schools is necessary to bridge the gaps of different cultures and religions and to promote a more agreeable global perspective. Without the incorporation of dance in the curriculum we are neglecting one of the most influential avenues to improve the quality of others' life journeys.

“The Impact of Whirlwind’s Basic Reading Through Dance Program on First Grade Students’ Basic Reading Skills: Study II” was published in 2002 by *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Students Academic and Social Development* and concluded that at-risk first grade students who were taught basic letter and sound connections through improvisational movement improved more in those basic reading skills than did the control group of similarly at-risk students. This study reported that the “development of linguistic abilities mirrors the development of dance phrase making.” In addition to academic benefits dance has proven to provide social by-products. A study also published in the 2002 *Critical Links* report entitled “Art and Community: Creating Knowledge Through Service in Dance” announced that teenagers serving time in detention facilities benefited from twice-weekly dance classes as they encouraged and generated patience and even compassion.

Dance provides a special mode in discovering what is good, meaningful, authentic, and valuable. It unites the mind, body, and ineffable spirit in search for wholeness, wisdom, and the sacred (Debenham, 2008). Dance is a journey that values the process as it fuses thought and feeling and helps us to achieve a better sense of self, meaning, and purpose. Dance as a way of knowing that brackets body-mind integrity as the descriptive essence of phenomenology provides a basis for self-understanding, consciousness, cognition, and kinesthetics (Fraleigh, 2000). Hanna (1999) explains that:

Dance education supports self-expression and communication, teaches the value of risk-taking, creativity, and problem solving, allows students to recognize multiple solutions to problems, nurtures understanding and respect, stimulates all senses and the appreciation of the body as an understanding of self as a human variety. (p. 32)

For these reasons and more it simply can no longer be left out of our schools' curriculum.

Our personal movement defines us as unique people. This realization of the self and its connections to the movement of daily life are additional contributions dance may have on students. Our consciousness of the dance element in movements of daily life furthers efficiency and enjoyment of work and play. Stinson in her article *Why Are We Doing This?* poses the possibility, "Think how schools might be different if we taught poetry, the arts, math, science as a source of delight and wisdom instead of meeting externally imposed standards." Schools give almost no assistance to students in learning what brings them joy, meaning, and satisfaction (Stinson, 2005). Feelings of powerlessness and domination are present for too many individuals in our society. Countless people are moving through their lives as strangers, not reflecting, choosing, judging; they have nothing to say (Greene, 1978, p. 151). It is almost as if we are encouraging our children to go through life emotionless like robots without ever experiencing joy. Dance offers this sense of joy, freedom, and interpretation. Repression of these natural movement urges will continue to have very negative and suppressing effects on students.

Characteristics of a High Quality Dance Program

How do we infuse these meaningful learning opportunities through movement in schools and how do we know that the steps we are taking to ensure movement experiences are available to students are appropriate and administered with the utmost quality? Essentially, what does a high quality dance program look like? Key components mandate the inclusion within the fine arts unit of schools, properly prepared and trained teachers, an appropriate and meaningful mission and purpose, positive classroom climate, and an appropriate dance education curriculum.

The first aspect to consider is the existence of the dance program within the fine arts, not lumped with physical education. Although dance and physical education are better apart, in reality the two continue to be paired in schools today. This failed union began in the 20th century in education systems in the United States. Although both deal with the body, the two disciplines offer contrasting curricula, one dealing with artistry and the other dealing with health and lifestyle. At a time when physical education was separate for males and females, dance was considered to be unchallenging and not masculine, thus contributing solely to the female sections of physical education (Nadel, 2003). Men during these early years were preparing for World War I and focused on sports and other activities deemed to be more masculine. Physical education is no longer separated by gender in schools; however the art of dance failed to make a successful transition during this change. Dance remains barely present in schools, and when it does, it appears primarily through the physical education component of curriculum, where the goals and mission of such are very different than those set for a successful dance program. It does not make sense to use physical education as an outlet for a fine art when fine arts departments already exist in schools. It is imperative to transition dance from physical education to fine arts in schools. Until this shift occurs dance will continue to be the 'step-sister' of the arts and its countless learning opportunities will not be experienced by students who very much need

them. High quality dance programs stand united with the fine arts. Only in this rich environment can the mission and purpose of such programs be successfully delivered to students.

All core subjects in schools are required to be taught by highly qualified teachers according to NCLB. Why then is anything less acceptable for dance when the NCLB act considers the arts to be core? Unfortunately, dance continues to be taught by under-qualified staff that do not understand the opportunities of movement and frequently have not experienced them personally. There are many factors that affect dance teacher preparation (or lack thereof) in schools. Some of these factors include the fact that most states do not require teacher certification in dance for teaching K-12 (only 16 states currently do) and the presence of dance training programs being housed in university dance departments, not education departments (Hanna, 1999). Properly trained dance teachers understand the key concepts to be taught in a high quality program. These concepts may include the basic elements of dance, different genres of dance and their respective history, culture, purpose, and society, interpretation, movement analysis, theory and philosophy, choreography, participation in dance, and exposure to performance (Hanna, 1999). Being a proficient dancer does not necessarily make one qualified to be a dance educator. There is a difference between dance training and dance education. In the K-12 learning experience we need dance educators, teachers who recognize appreciation, participation, creation, interpretation, aesthetic opportunities, and connections in dance. Without people like this being involved, high quality dance programs cannot sustain.

As mentioned previously there is a difference between dance training and dance education. Much of this difference stems from the mission of each. Although both are centered on the art of dance, training is focused on the pure physicality of dance, the execution of steps,

technique, presentation, and performance. It is my contention that dance training is to listen or to watch then to do, dance education entails much more. A high quality dance program addresses many aspects of the art of dance in its mission and purpose. The mission of dance in the K-12 learning experience of students should include statements about not only physical performance, but also about dance's history and culture, about aesthetic questioning, about appreciation, realization, interpretation, reflection, and the formation of connections, about anatomy and health related aspects, and about creativity, imagination, and creation. Addressing these areas in the mission of any dance program in the K-12 curriculum is imperative to carry out the proper purpose of dance in students' lives.

Appropriate classroom environment and climate is vital to the success of a dance program. Much of this responsibility falls on the dance educator. A good classroom climate is one in which the student feels safe to explore the space and express ideas verbally and nonverbally. In the classroom of a high quality dance program a student feels comfortable to move about and share with peers. Unlike the majority of their other classes, in K-12 dance classes students need to be encouraged to use their entire bodies as they come to know. They also need to feel free to answer questions without the fear of the "black and white" answer and feel able to solve problems in their own ways. Without these feelings of safety and comfort students will not fully engage in the learning opportunities offered through dance.

Lastly, a proper dance curriculum must be recognized and implemented in dance education programs. Many states, even those who do not have an official certification, do have instructional standards and goals set forth by the state department, as in West Virginia, and on a national level from the National Dance Association. These standards must align with the

programs' mission and goals, and then fall into place with the chosen curriculum implemented within each dance program.

Dance as an Integrated Subject

There are many ways in which we can incorporate movement and dance in schools. If the opportunity to develop and sustain a self-standing dance program does not exist we must consider ways to infuse meaningful learning opportunities through dance in the daily activities of high school education. One solution is to integrate it with subjects currently presented in the curriculum. There are many benefits to this type of fusion. Combining dance with subjects such as math, science, reading, and English allow each student to be connected to their natural state of movement while maintaining focus on what are currently considered by most to be “core” subjects. Ann Green Gilbert, dance education theorist, offers some great examples of marrying dance and subjects mentioned above to all age groups. This type of fusion can be incorporated by any and all teachers, not just dance teachers. In fact, this may be the most efficient way aside from a self-standing dance program, in which to address movement across the curriculum. Some of her ideas are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

Gilbert's Ideas for Incorporating Dance across the Curriculum

English

Write three words on the board (for example thinking, working, resting; look, find, lose). Make up a story using these three words. The first word will be the beginning idea, the second word the middle idea, and the third word the ending idea. Remember to have a climax. When you have thought of a story translate it into movement and show it to the class.

Mathematics

Can you make one-half of your body stretch? Can you make one-half of your body bend? Can you bend one-third of your body? Twist one-third?

What does an acute angle look like, an obtuse, and a right?

Science

Why does copper wire conduct electricity? Can the whole class form a copper atom to demonstrate the availability of the copper atom electrons?

Can each group show me the transformation of ice into water and then into water vapor? Each individual in your group be a molecule and all together demonstrate the spatial arrangement of molecules in the solid, liquid, and gas.

Social Studies

Can you describe through movement a custom of the United States? I will write a list of customs you are describing. Now describe through movement either a school rule or a home rule, and now a law.

Visual Art

Look at the design on this paper. I am going to ask you questions, but do not answer out loud. Think about the answer. What level is the design on? What direction or directions does the design move in? Are the lines sharp or smooth? How do the colors affect you? Etc. Now answer all of the questions through movement. Can you dance the design?

The ideas listed in Table 1 are very acceptable ways to fuse movement and the traditional classroom experiences of the education scene. Although a dance program existent within the fine arts offers more deep, meaningful, and inquisitive opportunities, these examples offer creative problem solving and reflective experiences to include in classrooms of many other subjects in order to promote learning through our most natural state in schools.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have addressed briefly the historical aspects of education in the United States. Now we turn to the arts to prepare us for an era that craves creative problem solvers and innovative thinkers to search for and develop teachers who know the value of giving children the freedom to assert and defend their own opinions without having to come up with arbitrary and elusive single right answers (Catterall, 2005). With this change in society must follow a change in the curriculum of the high school experience. Through the studies mentioned formerly it is evident that the arts benefit students in various areas of their lives. Dance takes this even further by reconnecting students to their natural state of movement while offering the same advantages as the other arts. However, the existence of a dance program does not necessarily mean that the students are benefiting from a high quality dance education experience. Certain components are essential for a high quality dance program to exist and sustain. If this situation does not prove plausible, movement also may be integrated with other subjects and concepts addressed in the school, while still engendering meaning in the experiences of the student.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

Qualitative research describes observations and experiences and interprets their meanings in relation to a specific theme. I have chosen to utilize qualitative research methods for this study as I form strong connections between my experiences in dance and dance education to uses in the realm of curriculum. Some believe that qualitative research methods are more “artistic” whereas quantitative methods are more “scientific.” In focusing on methods we lose the essence of what research is: the search for knowledge (Callejo-Perez, 2006). Elliot Eisner (1979) argues that educational activity is much like the artistic activity a painter engages in as he or she copes with emerging visual configurations on a canvas. My belief in the importance of maintaining the human in education has led me to choose qualitative research so as to remain human in my investigation.

Throughout my readings about qualitative research one method really spoke to me, the heuristic method of inquiry. As I developed this dissertation it was important to maintain my voice within it. I was a major part of the phenomenon being investigated and understanding my experiences was essential to the notions presented. I found it to be a very rigorous method as I constantly lived with the data, discovering powerful connections and outcomes, as I remained vulnerable to the “thing” itself. It was the relationships developed and the powerful meanings I came to know that confirmed my decision to use heuristic inquiry for this dissertation.

Through the heuristic line of inquiry I will use my personal journey to discover and explain meaning in movement experiences. I will emphasize meaning, not measurement, experience, not behavior, quality, not quantity through my dynamic relationship with dance and

movement over time, how it has influenced my journey and way of knowing, how it has influenced the journey of others, and just how important movement is to the human experience utilizing three data sources. These sources are:

1. My personal narrative, reflections, and lesson plans
2. Documents such as programs, letters, and cards
3. Existing assignments, assessment, and student work

With these sources in mind I will be addressing the following research questions:

1. How has dance and movement influenced my journey?
2. How has this influence affected the high school experience of my students?

Through these research questions and sources I hope to bring to light the essence of the human, movement, and its importance in the curriculum of schools. I will also discuss how movement is one of our many layers and languages as humans and the need to recognize it as such as we each are multi-faceted individuals. Through investigations and reflections on the process of dance and dance education throughout my journey I will become more wide-awake in my work and aware of the outcomes of this work.

Heuristics

Passion in the process of discovery distinguishes heuristic research from other models of human science (Douglass, 1985). At the very core of heuristic research is the personal, lived experience, the connections within the self, and the dynamic relationship between the researcher and the phenomena. It is the personal interpretation and understanding of lived occurrences

through time where the researcher remains visible throughout the process of coming to know and understand. Heuristic research retains the human component of experience instead of losing the person in the process and is free from utilitarian considerations, much like movement. Human presence is essential to experience thus essential to the research journey.

Clark Moustakas is the primary developer of the heuristic method of inquiry (Patton, 2002). He focuses on five basic phases of the heuristic process: immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. Moustakas, as quoted in Patton (2002), states that the immersion state, “requires my full presence, to savor, appreciate, smell, touch, taste, feel, know without concrete goal or purpose” (p. 486). Insights and awareness develop in the incubation phase. This is where understanding begins to take place. In the illumination phase understanding grows and themes and patterns emerge (Patton, 2002). The fourth stage, explication, allows the researcher to refine emergent themes and discover relationships. The final phase of creative synthesis involves bringing together the pieces that have emerged into a total experience (Patton, 2002). This culminating stage allows for new perspectives and meanings, a new understanding of the phenomena.

Moustakas has conducted numerous studies using the heuristic method including, “Loneliness” and “Loneliness and Love” (Moustakas, 1990). He (1990) describes the heuristic process as one that:

demands the total presence, honesty, maturity, and integrity of a researcher who not only strongly desires to know and understand but is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and

passionate concerns, and to undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey.

It is through these principles that I will investigate the phenomena of dance and movement in my life.

Research Design

The outline of Moustakas' heuristic process reveals the difficulty of defining and sequencing the internal intellectual processes involved in qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). I will undertake this challenge using Moustakas' five phases as a framework for my study. I will use his stages of the heuristic process to analyze my data. These phases will play an additional role as they provide a metaphor for my journey. As I live with the data, I will investigate my journey over time as passing through the stages of immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis keeping in mind that various aspects of living in and passing through these stages or processes is a complex and multi-layered notion. As we may exist in a specific stage, there are always bits and pieces that bleed over into the adjacent stages, supporting the cyclical nature of process. Utilizing Moustakas' inquiry process in the two ways mentioned will allow varying themes to emerge and connections to be formed as I present the data.

Data Selection

I will begin this study by investigating through my personal lens my journey through auto-narrative. Reflecting on the movement of my journey over time as a child, adult, student, and teacher I will gain insight to my current self, my present attitudes and beliefs, and better

understand the existence, meanings, and significance of movement in my life. This beginning phase of the study will bring out and identify unifying themes in my life, personal perceptions, and challenge me to examine my everyday experiences over time as they relate to movement. This is vital to the subsequent parts of the study. The analysis of my lesson plans combined with the concurrent investigation of existing student work, assignments, and assessment will provide information about the various meanings movement has had for me, my teaching, and my students. This analysis joined with the emergent themes in my auto-narrative, reflections, and observation will triangulate my data.

Data Description

My auto-narrative is the story of my life as it occurs to me. My story takes place mainly in north-central West Virginia with a few moments in southern Pennsylvania. Although in the same region, the setting and characters change on average every four years. I have moved around a bit. I was raised in a white, Christian, middle-class, stable family. My father was the bread-winner while my mother cared for me and my younger brother and sister in the home. After my youngest sibling entered kindergarten she went back to school, earned her associates degree, and then entered the work force. I am four years older than my brother and ten years older than my sister.

The lessons plans, examples of existing student work, assignments, and assessment chosen are all from the same site, a 9-12 high school in north-central West Virginia. The school exists in a community of about 7,700 middle class citizens. Approximately 860 students attend the high school of which 17% are enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. As per the 2005-2006 West Virginia Report Card for this school, the dropout rate is about 1.6%. The students of

this site are predominately college bound as 79.7% of them take the ACT and 23.4% take the SAT.

The observation portion comes from classes and instruction as part of the dance minor program at West Virginia University. It is a nineteen hour program that requires courses such as ballet, jazz, dance history and philosophy, modern, and theater production. This minor is offered through the College of Creative Arts.

Step-by-Step Through the Process

The first task is to write my auto-narrative. Next I will examine the archives of my lesson plans to notice how they have changed over time. With this data I will investigate deeper into why they have changed, what has influenced this change, and possible outcomes and effects on my life. I will continue by compiling assignments, assessment, and students' existing work to look for evidence of change over time and if this change is supported by my other data and document analysis. This document analysis will include student and parent letters and cards. My research using these data sources, in addition to by observation notes, will allow me to answer my research questions about the role of dance in my life as a dancer and as a dance educator and the influence of such during the high school experience for my students. It will also help me to look at my personal journey, the influences of movement and dance in it, and how that has influenced my identity.

Conclusion

The qualitative research method of heuristics will be used for this study. My personal narrative, lesson plans, various artifacts, and assignments, assessment, and existing student work

will provide important data in answering my research questions; how has dance and movement influenced my journey and how has this influence affected the high school experience of my students? Moustakas' five phase model will provide a framework for this study and a metaphor for my journey. Through this rigorous investigation I hope to better understand the power of dance and movement not only in my life but in the lives of my students.

Chapter 4: My Life as a Movement

My Personal Narrative

My parents enrolled me in my first dance class when I was three. Little did we know at the time the influence that would have over my life's work. I do not remember the classes or even recital that year. All I know about that time is what I watch on home video. When I see myself in that miniature tutu, prancing around to "Animal Crackers in My Soup" I get a smile on my face. My smile is not so much about the video itself, but about the feeling of joy and freedom I still experience to this day when I get to dance, when I get to feel free to move.

The earliest memory of dance I can recall is the dance recital I performed in at the age of five. I can still feel the itchy purple costume I wore with black leather shoes. I remember the stale smell of the auditorium and that my tights would just not stay up. I recall sitting in awe as I looked upward at the older dancers in their elaborate tutus and other costumes, wishing I could be them just for the night's concert. All of the younger children had to sit on stools in the 'waiting area' with our names on them with masking tape and watch the recital on a closed-circuit television. I was so bored. All I wanted to do was jump around. I was so excited to go out onto the stage. However, the parent chaperones stood over us, watching our every twist and turn, making sure we did not leave our stools until that one moment when it was our turn to dance.

The gold sequins on my costume shined in the bright stage lights. The beams were so bright I could not see anyone in the audience. "Where are Mom and Dad?" Then the music came on and like tiny dancing robots we knew exactly what to do. Step touch, step touch, turn followed by a loud applause at the end of the song as we exited the stage. It seemed to only last

but a second. Then, sadly, back to the ‘waiting area’ we went. Within seconds mothers came rushing through the doors backstage. “You were great sweetheart. You did so good.” And the night was done.

Although I cannot recall specific classes at that time in my life, I do remember coming home from school, getting a snack, and packing my dance bag routinely a few nights a week. Dance class had loud music, other girls my age, and cool clothes. Dance was fun. At the recital the following year the ‘waiting area’ was enforced without fail. However, I somehow managed to escape and sneak backstage. As I sat quietly in the curtains on stage left, the side where no one ever stood, I stared at the performers, their costumes, and the lights. It was as if I was in another world, a fantasy land. This was my secret place just for a moment.

Several of my friends danced at the same place I did when I was in kindergarten through third grade. Two of them were even my neighbors. Dance did not stop at the studio for us. Any chance we could we would gather our old dance costumes and other clothes, dress up, and perform our own personal recitals for anyone who would watch, imaginary or real. We would choose all types of music, especially songs we heard on the radio or favorite tapes we had lying around the house. Jumping, swinging, swaying, leaping; we would dance until we ran out of breath. The few pictures I have from these events are full of smiles and you can almost hear the laughter jump off of the paper.

I was devastated when my parents told me we were moving away. All I could think about was leaving my dance studio, my dance teacher, and my friends. I was certain that I would never find another dance teacher in the world like the one I had. She was the “coolest” teacher in my eyes. She dressed so neat, played exciting music, and danced like no one I had ever seen.

She made me feel good. She let me play to music. She helped me perform on stage. I thought the world had come to an end because I would never get to do that with her again. Tears ran down my face as my mom took me to say goodbye for the last time. I will always remember that. I just did not want to leave.

As my family traveled to its new destination one of the first things my mom did was enroll me in a local dance studio. It was so weird. I did not know anyone. This feeling was carried over from the school day where I was trying to make friends and feel out the new situation. Dance classes came and went and although I still loved to dance and move to the music it took me a while to adjust to the new style. The music sounded so old, especially when they used the record player. The teachers did not smile very often. I did not like it at first, but then the studio and its students grew on me. Evening sessions remained a way for me to unwind and to be free. The music just made me want to move. The end of year recitals were always fun. Fortunately there was not a 'waiting area.' After three years of study there my parents again informed me that we were moving.

I was not upset to leave the studio. I was ready for a change. The teachers did not challenge me. They were not fun. So, after saying goodbye to my friends, we packed up and traveled to our new home. Again, one of the first things my mom did was to search and enroll me in a dance school. It was here I rekindled my strong passion for dancing and movement.

The academic school I attended at this point, for seventh grade, was exponentially larger than any other school I had attended. It, combined with the high school, spanned an enormous set of buildings with six floors. It was the biggest place I had ever seen. School was scary at first. Not only was I in a new place, I did not know a single person in it. It was overwhelming to

travel from class to class in this gigantic space with no one familiar to turn to. That feeling soon passed though as I turned to my evening dance classes for release.

I remember walking into the studio. “Wow, this place has windows to watch the classes. The dancers look so talented. The teachers are so pretty.” I was mesmerized at first glance. Classes began. I loved going to this place in the evenings. The teachers smiled and had fun. The classes were hard, but encouraging. The music was wonderful and amusing. I loved everything about it; the way the teachers taught, the music we heard, the different ways they taught us to move our bodies, the ideas for the recital pieces. It was all just so amazing, like a breath of fresh air.

Because I was new to the studio I could not be in the company yet. I was perfectly fine with that at first. I was content taking class and performing at the annual show. I remember how creative and entertaining the dance pieces were, sitting in wonder after each performance and loving the dances of which I was a part. I developed ‘dance friends.’ These were girls that I saw in school and at the studio. I felt like we had a special secret in school, a special society we retreated to at night that no one else could know about. I had a special bond with them. It felt good.

The company at the studio often attended competitions and events at which they danced. I remember their black jump suits they wore the day of any event. They had gold stitching with brilliant rhinestones. I wanted one. My parents purchased a black jump suit for me. I loved it, even though it did not have the “cool” company rhinestones. I wore it to school any chance I could. It made me feel like part of the group. One day, the company dancers got to leave school early to travel to a competition. I remember feeling so left out in history class when two other

dancers, in their black jump suits, were excused from class, while I had to remain. The other students asked me, “Don’t you dance with them? Why aren’t you leaving?” I don’t remember my response, just the feeling of embarrassment as I sat in my black jump suit, rhinestoneless.

The following dance year began with excitement as I was placed in the more advanced classes. The routines became even more difficult, creative, and entertaining. I even had a solo piece that year. I remember it; it was tap. My silver hat matched my silver shoes and felt like diamonds when I was on stage. The recital that year topped any one I had ever been part of even though it ended in devastation for me. Weeks prior I learned that again my family would be moving so this would be my last recital at this studio. As I performed my solo at the recital the teachers made an announcement, wishing me luck and wishes as I moved on. Worst of all, I learned that they were going to ask me to be part of their company the following year, but off I went to start over again.

Just like each individual, each dance studio possesses its own unique style. At this point my dancing was a fusion of the styles of the studios I had attended. It became harder and harder to find my “dance home.” By now I was entering the ninth grade. We found a studio that had recently opened and enrolled. This studio was supposed to be the hottest new dancing place in town. The teachers were young, the classes were huge, and even though it was a fairly new business, everyone seemed to have already established their cliques. I was not “in” with any of them. Nonetheless, I went to classes after school and tried to fit in. The teachers tended to have their favorites, more so than any other place I had attended. I hated that feeling. I was jealous. I wanted the teachers to dote on me, to put me in the front, to design special sections of a piece for me. I began to notice a common theme. The dancers who were favored were most often the

ones that spent what seemed like every waking moment at the studio, in other words, those who spent the most money for tuition. The bitter feelings grew when a sign was hung on the wall of the waiting room. It shouted, "This is not a democracy, it is a dictatorship." Personal opinions, ideas, and beliefs were not valued here. It was not about the art of the movement, but about who wore the shiniest costume or attended Saturday classes. After two years, even though in the same town, I changed studios.

For the last two years of my "studio dancing" career I remained disgruntled. I had lost the feeling of being free when I danced and continued to struggle to give the teachers what I thought they wanted. Dewey (1947) recognizes this state as he describes that many students experience these feelings. The trouble lies in the habits, standards, and ideas of the teacher (Dewey, 1947). He continues his argument about these types of students' feelings and experiences; "Their freedom is repressed, and the growth of their own personalities stunted."

I missed class once in a while during that time, more often than I ever had, and only took one class my senior year. I rarely rehearsed steps from class. Once class was over I did not think about it again until the next session. I had had enough. I was just dancing because it was something I had been doing forever, or for as long as I could remember. I remember the last moment I spent on the stage. It was my senior tap solo. I was numb as I danced on stage, feeling unhappy and uncomfortable with the costume I was wearing and dissatisfied with the choreography. As the music stopped and the lights went dark I exited the stage. Tears poured down my face. I was overwhelmed with sadness and the realization that I would never perform on stage again. That was it. I could not believe it. Fifteen years had come to a close in the blink of an eye.

High school graduation came and went. College seemed surreal. It seemed weird not to be dancing, but then again, who did that after high school? A few weeks into the semester I received a call from the principal of the high school I attended. They were in need of someone to take the charge of their dance group, Junior Orchesis. The administration was down to the bottom of the barrel and had nowhere else to turn. It was me, or the program would dissolve. I accepted the position, not knowing how it would affect my life. It was a chance for me to remain involved in dance. Why not?

Task one, auditions. Now that I had been assigned the director position of this group, I had to establish who exactly would be part of it. What did the dancers have to perform in the audition, who would judge, how many points should each item be worth, how many girls should I keep? Question ran in and out of my head like the ticker on a news broadcast. I do not remember who judged that year or exactly how many girls were members of the group. What I do remember is being forced to look at dance and performance in a whole new light. Instead of watching and doing I was required to organize and design, teach instead of learn, but I learned more than I taught. I was in charge of a budget, attendance policies, communicating with faculty and parents, advertising shows, and keeping twenty high school girls working together through the process and performance. More importantly, providing opportunities for self-expression remained a focus and goal. I developed some guiding principles for the group and my direction of it. To encourage freedom of expression I provided some framework for student choreography and promoted notions of creation and design within the dancers. Instead of me being the “all-knowing” teacher it was important to me to allow the dancers to work as a team with me, blending their ideas with mine in our artistic development.

As a group we produced two shows annually, a holiday concert and one in the spring. With a late start, I began to hurriedly put together performance pieces for the concert. I was very nervous stepping onto the floor that day, the first day of teaching the dancers. We began with the opening number. These girls, some only one year younger than me, trusted me to choreograph their opening dance and ensure that their dancing experiences were fun. I cannot remember the first routine I taught or even the show that winter. I remember that there were student choreography pieces and that the principal praised my work after the show, but none of those memories compare to what I consider to be one of the most powerful experiences of my life.

After the Sunday matinee performance that winter one of the senior dancers presented me with a card. This simple piece of cardboard contained powerful messages from the dancers that touched me in a way I never expected. As I opened the card tears ran down my face. It was one of those rare moments in one's life when time seems to stand still. Some messages were longer than others, but as I finished reading each message, some of them two and three times, I realized something. This was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, to teach high school students, to be their mentor throughout their rich experiences in dance. The guiding principles mentioned formerly influenced these great experiences and also allowed powerful group work within the art of dance to emerge. Such as experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality of self-sufficiency; it is *an* experience (Dewey, 1958, p. 35).

I was not naïve to think I would be able to be a teacher of dance at the high school level. Those positions were reserved for the inner city schools in places like Manhattan and Chicago, not West Virginia. I planned to teach high school and to organize and run a dance program

similar to the one of which I had the charge during my college experience. Done, my life was ready to fall into place.

I studied foreign language at the university I attended in addition to maintaining the role of director of the high school Junior Orchestras. I focused my undergraduate studies on Spanish and TESL in addition to mathematics. It was my intent to be a high school teacher in the area of Spanish or math. Graduation came and went and I became certified to teach in the areas I had hoped. As far as I was concerned, my life was headed just where I had planned for it to go. With a bachelor degree under my belt I proceeded to pursue a master's degree in Secondary Education. Meanwhile I began searching for teaching positions around the area as I heard that Spanish teachers were in high demand. What I heard was true as I landed my first teaching position, in Spanish, at a local high school.

At this point I had been directing what I had come to call "my" dance group for four years. I had become attached to the dancers at this point and had a hard time parting from my role. I decided to stay on for a fifth year. During that year I struggled to balance my new career with my obligations to the dance group. Not only were the two positions at different high schools, they were thirty-five miles apart. I made it work though because of the rapport I had built with the girls and my strong appreciation and connection to both jobs.

The final production that year was emotionally difficult. It was at this point I realized I was once again saying goodbye to dance. This time it was different though. Even though I was not going to dance again, I also realized that I was not going to choreograph again, to design again, and to teach my movement ideas again. The resignation of this directorship affected my personal feelings of being free and freedom of expression. Through the medium of dance I had

been expressing myself for years, as well as encouraging this same notion with my students. I would have to develop different mentoring experiences now. My new school did not have a similar dance program and was not open to starting one up, as my inquiry was abruptly turned down. I had to continue my career as a teacher though, and I was happy with that.

That summer came and went and as the start of my second school year was approaching I received a call from my principal. “You have a dance background, correct?” “Yes I do. Why do you ask?” “Would you be willing to teach dance this year? I know it is another prep period, but we need an additional fine art elective for the kids.” And that was it. I fumbled through the inaugural year creating lessons from my past experiences in dance, from pop culture, from online ideas and resources. I felt awkward and a bit scared as I struggled to design a curriculum that I felt addressed not dance as in a studio, but dance as education. I was very precise in my expectations and styles of movement. My class was all female students. Before I knew it, the year was over and much to my surprise two classes were on the schedule for the following year in addition to a math class.

I was still nervous as I continued to develop what I foresaw as a dance program at the high school, in addition to the curriculum. A few boys registered for the class in its sophomore year. Refining and adding onto concepts and units I had already developed, I began to truly appreciate dance and movement as teaching and learning tools across the curriculum. I spread notions of movement into my Spanish and math classes. It worked. The students learned, smiled, remembered. I then brought into the dance classroom concepts of visual art, literature, history, and more. I was beginning to see the big picture.

My classes grew exponentially. My third year teaching the art, two-thirds of my schedule was dance, including for the first time an auditioned class titled Dance Ensemble, modeled after my experience in college with the high school Junior Orchestras. I had somehow proven to the administration that dance was important, dance was vital to the learning process, that dance was a necessary component of our curriculum (and it offered another elective for which students could register). I had done it unexpectedly. I had done it without intent. I had done it for the right reasons. I felt good and free in my work. I considered why my classes grew and can now make a connection between this increase and Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow. Frequency of kinesthetic flow is related to traits like happy, satisfied, free, and in control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 156).

Also during this school term, through collaboration with another dance teacher in the southern part of the state, our high school dance program hosted a state-wide conference to promote dance education. The West Virginia Secondary Dance Alliance Conference was held in the winter of 2007 and played host to approximately ten high schools and over one hundred dance students. Various master teachers in the genres of ballet, modern, jazz, tap, and hip hop led classes for the students (See Figures 1 and 2.) while the dance educators held sessions to discuss best practices, Content Standards and Objectives, the state of dance in public schools, and more. The state coordinator for the arts also attended this event and presented to the group.

This event was important for the dance students in West Virginia. It was powerful for the dancers to experience others, just like themselves, studying the art of movement within their high school experiences. Often times in our work we feel isolated and alone, like no one else is

interested in dance, like no one else values its outcomes. However, this conference allowed the participants to experience a sense of camaraderie, to be part of a larger dance family.



Figure 1. Modern dance class at the WV Secondary Dance Alliance Conference, 2007.



Figure 2. Jazz dance class at the WV Secondary Dance Alliance Conference, 2007.

Simultaneously, during the winter of my third year as the dance teacher, my fourth year at the high school, I decided to enroll in the Curriculum and Instruction doctoral program at the local university. This was something I had always wanted to do, but never felt the right time to do, until now. I had found something I felt I was an expert in. I could make a difference and contribution to the field with my work. My studies in the program only fueled my work at school. I felt amazing.

During my fourth year as a high school dance teacher and director of the new dance program I really started to feel at peace. I continued to build the curriculum (See Figure 3.), to incorporate guest choreographers and instructors (See Figure 4.), and to collaborate with the same teacher in the southern part of the state as I had with the dance conference. We wanted to continue to encourage other schools to incorporate this essential art as we had attempted to do by

offering the Secondary Dance Alliance Conference. We took our students to the state-wide dance festival at the capital where we were the only high schools represented among the hundreds of other dancers from private studios and companies. We completed work with the state department of education. This included the design of on-line instructional guides, training teachers and other people in the field through RESA (Regional Education Service Agency) for example, and other arts incorporation and evaluation projects. We continue this work today, even though no other schools have developed a comprehensive dance program. However, our ideas are out there and hopefully being utilized in various classrooms. My relationship with this educator was one of the most influential aspects of my professional development over this period of time. A strong sense of camaraderie still exists between us as work within the field of dance education.



Figure 3. Dance I and II participating in a modern dance unit, 2008.



Figure 4. Dance Ensemble with guest choreographer, 2008.

Another dance educator was about to enter my life and change it forever. As I read to complete the literature review for this dissertation, one of my committee members urged me to read Maxine Greene’s text, “Variations on a Blue Guitar” in which she offers her lectures from the Lincoln Center Institute that focus on aesthetic experiences in education. I devoured her words. Greene’s work made me question just what it was about art and dance that could change one’s life, a life like mine. Like Greene (2001), I was passionate about “releasing capacities, energies, ways of being in the world that are ordinarily suppressed” (p. 77). I decided I must attend the Lincoln Center Institute myself and experience what I read in order to better understand aesthetic education as an intentional effort to move persons to more informed and more discriminating encounters with diverse art forms (Greene, 2001, p.139).

Three months later I found myself navigating through Manhattan to find the Juilliard School, the place of the Lincoln Center Institute. Stepping through those doors and into the

studio of our class would change my life forever. I enrolled in the conference independently, but would leave with two people who would be in my life for years to come, along with their 1200 students. This was just the beginning of our accidental collaboration.

It was as if magnets drew us together. Two public school dance teachers found each other in the initial minutes of introductions during the first session of the weeklong event. We were surrounded by theater and visual art teachers and somehow in a room of over thirty people we found each other immediately. She was there with her administrator. For the rest of the week we were inseparable.

Staci and I related each experience of the conference to our dance classrooms and came to realize just how similarly we ran them. The likeness of our professions and the execution of such were indescribable and uncanny as we came from such different backgrounds, training, and teaching situations. It is from these three differences that our collaboration developed and our appreciative inquiry began.

While our styles and personalities are strikingly alike, Staci and I bring very diverse pieces to our relationship and students through a common vision. We both hold a unique position in the public school systems in which we teach. Staci and I have both chosen to commit to teaching the most forgotten art in schools, dance. Within the hierarchy of the four fine arts in schools, it continues to receive the least amount of privilege in curriculum. Therefore, fewer and fewer schools are offering movement experiences, making our positions all the more exceptional. Consequently, we both experience feelings of isolation as a result of our distinct areas. We are committed to creating these social and aesthetic experiences for our students. In addition, the manners in which we provide and deliver these experiences are comparable. This common value

and commitment to dance and creative movement experiences are items we both bring to our collaborative work and what fuels the reciprocal nature of our relationship. Our training, communities, and schools, among other things, are very dissimilar.

As mentioned formerly, I was raised in north-central West Virginia. I went to a regular public high school then off to the state's flagship school, West Virginia University, to pursue a teaching degree. Certified to teach Spanish and Math in the secondary schools I began my first job at a high school just south of my hometown. Staci grew up in Queens, New York. She attended New York City public schools through grade eight then auditioned to attend the prestigious LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts. Upon graduation from LaGuardia in Manhattan she continued to study dance at Queens College where she graduated with a degree in dance education. She has spent the past years teaching a full schedule of dance at a New York City public elementary school in Brooklyn, New York.

Our diverse backgrounds continue in the schools in which we teach. I teach students ages fourteen to eighteen in a very small town. We have less than 2 percent of students of minorities. Our children go home to supportive families, outside activities, and good meals. Staci teaches students from the ages of four to twelve in an inner-city school where less than 1 percent of students are white and numerous students are learning English as their second language. The children often go home to projects where their parent or guardian (often grandma) works night shifts, requiring them to care for their younger siblings. The meal they eat at school may likely be the only meal of their day and they often share beds in their cramped quarters, where cockroaches and bedbugs are anticipated. Yet, our common thread of dance and movement experiences is invaluable to our students, regardless of their differences.

Although we both speak the language of dance, our dialects are very different. Throughout the week Staci and I spent together, learning about each other, talking about our experiences growing up and other social interaction, it became obvious to us that this learning experience was something we needed to share with our students at home. It was powerful. Through the common language of dance we both had come to know a new culture, way of thinking, and way of life.

The idea for collaboration spawned from our great experiences during our week at the Juilliard School and was additionally motivated by our respective drives for success in our field. With the support of our administrators we were excited to provide new opportunities for our students including multi-cultural, diverse, and dynamic social and aesthetic movement experiences. Our collaborative work also extends to the community through civic virtue.

The specifics of how and what Staci and I do in our collaborative work are diverse and unique. We have scheduled and continue to schedule teacher trades, in which we teach lessons at each other's school centered on our personal community values and culture in addition to the more traditional lessons of creative movement and dance. (See Figures 5 through 17.) Our students have exchanged pictures and letters in a pen-pal style activity that promotes a very social aspect of the work. These are only a few examples of our accidental collaboration works.



Figure 5. Kindergarten dance class winding down, Brooklyn, New York, 2009.



Figure 6. Scarf dances with a fourth grade dance class Brooklyn, New York, 2009.



Figure 7. Rhythm and timing lesson with a third grade dance class, Brooklyn, New York, 2009.



Figure 8. Warm-up with a first grade dance class, Brooklyn, New York, 2009.



Figure 9. Warm-up with dance I and II classes with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 10. Dance I and II classes watching a movement sequence with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 11. Dance I and II classes rehearse a given combination with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 12. Dance Ensemble in preparation for their culminating concert with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 13. Dance Ensemble in preparation for their culminating concert with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 14. Dance Ensemble in a modern dance workshop with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 15. Dance Ensemble in a modern dance workshop with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 16. Dance Ensemble in a modern dance workshop with guest instructor Staci, 2009.



Figure 17. Hip hop class with dance I and II with guest instructor Staci, 2009.

Staci and I are committed to our artistic collaboration and the powerful experiences that result for us, our students, and their communities. It is a matter of posing questions on both sides and of loving the questions that merge with one another, questions about living in the world and creating communities and collectivities, caring for each other, making each other feel worthwhile (Greene, 2001, p. 159). It is difficult to teach something without knowing it deeply, experiencing it for yourself. This movement of collaboration, and collaboration of movement, has extended to both communities involved. Dance itself is and has historically been a very social art form and mode of expression. Attitudes and understandings have been influenced through the common theme of movement and dance. A sense of empathy has been developed. A deep connection is felt between my students and those of Staci. In the larger world, they have a special connection. Despite their differences in home life, environments, peers, and more,

there is a commonality of dance. No matter the age, race, or place, they all can dance and have come to understand dance as a social component of their lives bridging neighborhoods, states, and nations.

After the pivotal summer of our meeting, I began the fifth year of my career as a dance educator and felt secure in the curriculum I had developed. I had collected and created mounds of resources. My curriculum included movement from such styles as modern/contemporary, ballet, jazz, waltz, fox trot, salsa, hip hop, and more. The history of each was a vital part of the different styles and sections as was influential people and events. The study of great performances was included as was the study of newer ones. Dance and movement for interpretation and communication became a major component of the dance program and the curriculum I had developed for it, as did creativity and imagination. Also during this time I became involved in the development of the West Virginia Coalition for Arts Education (WVCAE). This is a small group of arts teachers from around the state committed to promoting the arts in a solution-based manner. We presented to the state board of education after a meeting with the state superintendent about solutions to some of the issues with the current state of the arts in West Virginia. It was powerful to meet and work with other people who had developed the same passion and belief for their work in the schools as I had.

Enrollment in the dance classes continued to increase the following year. Also, the male to female ratio began to balance. I found that several coaches encouraged their athletes to take my class for its physical benefits and creative writing teachers encouraged taking dance for its interpretive characteristics. Parents encouraged their children to register for it because of its

unique existence in school. I felt successful for the simple fact that more and more people had the opportunity to experience dance in their lives.

Throughout this time I have changed as a dancer and as a teacher. As a dancer, my definition of the art has been reshaped by my experiences as a mentor and designer/choreographer. I find myself to be more open than in my younger years to varying perspectives and interpretations of dance and the presence of meaning behind the movement. I understand the power of dance on enhancing my life and providing imaginative experiences within it. As a teacher I am aware of the importance of the feeling of freedom in my students. I find myself much more focused on the process instead of the product and encouraging my students to understand their sense of being in the world.

I am in my seventh year of teaching and my sixth year as director of the dance program at the high school. I have found satisfaction in my life's work as I continue to teach dance and meaningful movement to high school students every day. I am happy to introduce the most forgotten, least privileged art in schools to hundreds of students. I am free, no longer in the "waiting area" backstage, but performing my art every day for people who get to join in the spotlight with me.

Lesson Plans

The lesson plans from my initial year of teaching dance to those of my fifth year of instruction vary tremendously. From the format to the content to the language, there is a distinct evolution from year one to year five. In this section I have outlined the scope and sequence of

each of the years I have taught dance at the high school level. Additionally, you will find various sections of my actual lesson plans from 2004 to 2009 to provide evidence of change over time.

Scope and Sequence of Dance Classes.

2004-2005

2 classes

1. Ballet
2. Jazz
3. Tap
4. Research Project on a historically famous dancer
5. Hip hop
6. Joint combination (each student brings a phrase to add to make an entire routine)
7. Interactive videos on yoga and Pilates
8. Christmas Assembly performance
9. Modern dance
10. Interactive videos on swing, waltz, and salsa

2005-2006

4 classes

1. Ballet
2. Jazz
3. Reading on healthy lifestyles and goals
4. Tap
5. Hip hop
6. Pop culture/dance (So You Think You Can Dance, etc.), Michael Jackson's Thriller
7. Yoga
8. Modern (guest artists)
9. Research project on a historically famous/influential dancer
10. Ballroom (including Dancing With the Stars)
11. Christmas Assembly performance
12. Review

2006-2007

3 classes plus the auditioned ensemble as a class

Dance I and II

1. History of dance, why people dance (prehistoric to current day)
2. Ballet
3. Modern
4. Jazz

5. Hip hop
6. Pop culture (So You Think You Can Dance, America's Best Dance Crew), Dance in Music Videos (comparing videos), Michael Jackson's Thriller
7. Ballroom (including Dancing With the Stars)
8. Yoga
9. Research project in pairs on any dancer (Power Point presentation)
10. Christmas Assembly performance
11. Reading on healthy lifestyles and goals
12. Review

Dance Ensemble

1. Ballet and dance conditioning
2. Basketball routine (jazz)
3. Attendance at WVU Winter Dance Concert (critique and reflection)
4. Host/prepare for/attend the WV Secondary Dance Alliance Conference
5. WV Dance Festival performance piece (modern)
6. Morgantown Spring Festival of Dance
7. WV Dance Festival
8. Student choreography work
9. Guest choreographer
10. Finale piece
11. Culminating concert
12. Yoga

2007-2008

3 classes plus the auditioned ensemble as a class

Dance I and II

1. History of dance, why people dance (prehistoric to current day)
2. Ballet
3. Jazz
4. Modern
5. Guest instructor
6. Hip hop
7. International influence on dance (Dancers' perspectives in Tokyo and Russia)
8. Pop culture, So You Think You Can Dance, Dance in Music Videos, Michael Jackson's Thriller
9. Reading on healthy lifestyles and goals
10. Ballroom (including Dancing With the Stars)
11. Yoga
12. Dance reality show design and proposal
13. Christmas Assembly performance
14. Sculpture project
15. Review

Dance Ensemble

1. Ballet and dance conditioning
2. Basketball routine (jazz)
3. Attendance at WVU Dance Concert (critique and reflection)
4. WV Dance Festival performance piece (modern)
5. Morgantown Spring Festival of Dance
6. WV Dance Festival
7. Student choreography work
8. Class pieces
9. Guest choreographer
10. Finale piece
11. Culminating concert
12. Yoga and Pilates

*This year also included a required text from which we read and reflected entitled “The Dancer Prepares: Modern Dance for Beginners” by James Penrod and Janice Plastino

2008-2009

3 classes plus the auditioned ensemble as a class

Dance I and II

1. History of dance, why people dance (prehistoric to current day)
2. Modern
3. Guest instructor
4. Ballet
5. Dance in Music Videos, Pop culture (So You Think You Can Dance, America’s Best Dance Crew)
6. Jazz
7. International influence on dance (Dancers’ perspectives in Tokyo and Russia)
8. Reading on healthy lifestyles and goals
9. Yoga
10. Interdisciplinary project (connecting dance with any other discipline)
11. Michael Jackson’s Thriller, Jackson’s influence on music media, aesthetic questioning, underlying meanings
12. Ballroom (including Dancing With the Stars)
13. Dance show design and proposal
14. Christmas Assembly performance
15. Pilates (guest teacher)
16. Choreography project based on a painting
17. Review

Dance Ensemble

1. Modern technique
2. Ballet and dance conditioning
3. Basketball routine (jazz)
4. Attendance at WVU Dance Concert (critique and reflection)

5. WV Dance Festival piece (modern)
6. Morgantown Spring Dance Festival
7. WV Dance Festival
8. Arts Alive performance at the state capital
9. Student choreography proposals and work
10. Class pieces
11. Guest choreographer
12. Guest artist/instructor
13. Finale piece
14. Culminating concert (including pieces from dance studios in the area)
15. Yoga and Pilates
16. Questioning and discussion (Important of the arts, creativity)
17. Investigation and preparation for attendance at the National High School Dance Festival in 2010

Lesson Plan Examples.

See below Figures 18-35.

WEEK BEGINNING Dec 13-17, 2004	
SUBJECT	TIME
Dance	Blk 2
① Roll/greeting [Footloose + journal	
② Discussion on performance	
③ Distribute Modern Dance reading/questions	
④ Individual work	
⑤ Discuss articles/wksts	
① Roll/greeting	
② Warm up/Stretching	
③ Practice modern movements from worksheet	
④ Positive/negative space	
⑤ Cool down	
① Roll/greeting	
② Warm up/Stretching	
③ Journal entry	
④ Modern combination in groups	
⑤ Perform for class (book ideas)	
	⑥ Cool down

Figure 19. Year one modern lesson, December 2004.

WEEK BEGINNING		Dec 20 - 23 2004	
SUBJECT	Dance	TIME	Bk 2
①	Roll/greeting		
②	Warm up/Stretching		
③	Review Improv/Modern characteristics/methods		
④	Improvisational dance in groups.		
⑤	Cool down		
①	Roll/greeting		
②	Warm up/Stretching		
③	Last day of Modern/Improv.		
④	Cool down/stretching		
⑤	Review modern dance info Quiz tomorrow		
①	Roll/greeting		
②	Journal entry		
③	Quiz on Modern Dance		
④	Intro to partner dances (will begin after break)		

Figure 20. Year one modern lesson continued, December 2004.

WEEK BEGINNING	
Nov 7, 2005	
SUBJECT	TIME
Dance	2
① Intro "Elements of Modern Dance" - discuss vocab and go through movements	
② Object Analysis and choreography	
① In pairs, distribute one object per pair	
② Students will analyze and choreograph 30 sec piece	
③ Present for a grade explanation	

Figure 21. Year two modern lesson, November 2005.

WEEK BEGINNING	Nov 14, 2005
SUBJECT	TIME
1) In pairs students receive a word	2
2) Students analyze and choreograph 45 sec piece for their word	
3) Present and explain	
4) Intro WV Dance Co	
WV Dance Company Presents Performance and Workshops	
WV Dance Company Presents Workshops	

Figure 22. Year two modern lesson continued, November 2005.

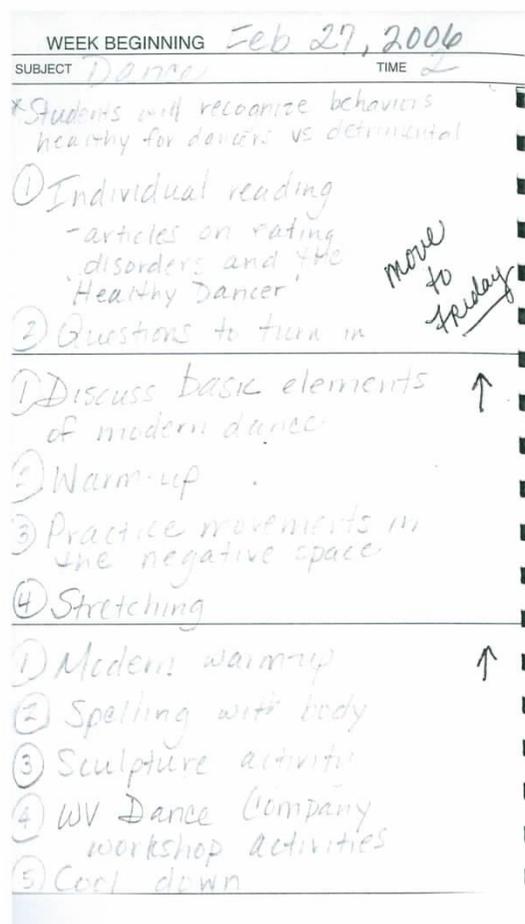


Figure 23. Year two modern lesson, February 2006.

WEEK BEGINNING	March 27, 2006
SUBJECT	Yoga
TIME	2
① Stretching	
② Intro basic positions	
③ Poses and Breathing	
④ Focused Meditation	

Figure 24. Year two yoga lesson, March 2006.

WEEK BEGINNING 9-4, 2007	
SUBJECT	TIME
Barre	2
<p>① Stretching</p> <p>② Barre work plie, tendu, grand battement, rond de jambe, passe, developpe</p> <p>③ Changement, Grand jete</p> <p>④ Pique/Chaine</p> <hr/> <p>① Stretching</p> <p>② Barre work -same as Tues, plus fondu and degage</p> <p>③ Glissade, pas de chat</p> <p>④ Piroette ←</p>	

Figure 25. Year four ballet lesson, September 2007.

WEEK BEGINNING 10-1, 2007	
SUBJECT	TIME
① WDC Workshop body, space, force, time	2
② Movement in negative space	
③ Spell w/ body	
④ Sculpture activity	
① Warmup / Stretching	
② Floor work (IDAE) - place, kick, jump etc	
③ Combo	
④ Cool down	
① Warm up / Stretching	
② Floor work	
③ Review combo	
④ Add on new steps	
⑤ Practice in small groups	
① Inspirations for choreography - Discussion	
② Form 1 - Inspiration from words/poems - discuss	
③ How can we use the insp.	
① Warmup	
② Groups of 2-3, object inspired choreography	
③ Present	
④ Prepare next week's ^{number} project	

Figure 26. Year four modern lesson, October 2007.

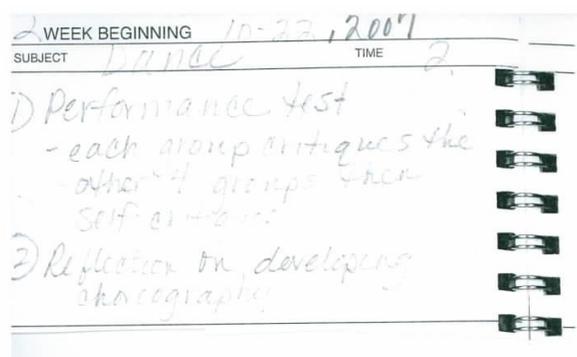


Figure 27. Year four modern lesson, October 2007.

WEEK BEGINNING 1-2, 2008	
SUBJECT	TIME
Sculpture activity	
① Intro from on-line instructional guides	
② In. groups complete sculpture part of unit	
③ Written explanations	
① Begin movement/chorus inspired by sculpture	
② Coordinate music	
③ Begin performance piece	
① Review/continue work on performance piece	
② Begin written component w/in group	

Figure 28. Year four modern lesson, January 2008.

WEEK-BEGINNING 3-3, 2008	
SUBJECT	TIME
Dance	2
① Modern - basic elements of dance	
* presentations of Broadway show group research	
① Modern - Choreographic Structures and Principles	
① Modern - Choreographic Structures/ Principles in application	
West Virginia Dance Company performance critique	
WVDC	
West Virginia Dance Company workshop	
WVDC	

Figure 29. Year four modern lesson, March 2008.

WEEK BEGINNING		5-12, 2008	
SUBJECT	Dance	TIME	2
TOC			
T	Academic prompt (in pairs or 3s) ↓		
	(name & describe your show)	→ price, goal, etc.	
	If you were director of new dance		
	show & you had to	(dead or alive)	
	choose 3 judges...		
	who & why? Present in PPT		
	background, capsule work, etc.		
TOC			

Figure 30. Year four research project, March 2008.

LESSON PLAN for the 21st Century Classroom in Harrison County Schools		
Teacher: <u>Stephanie Morris</u>	21st Century Tools: (drop-down menu)	
Course: <u>Dance</u>	21C.O.9-12.2.TT2 Student collaborates with peers, experts & others to contribute to a content-related knowledge base by using technology to compile, synthesize, produce, & disseminate information, models, & other creative works.	
Date: <u>August 26 - 29, 2008</u>		
21st Century Learning Skills: (drop-down menu)		
21C.O.9-12.2.LS4 Student visualizes connections and independently produces solutions; shows originality, concentration, commitment to completion, & persistence to develop unique & cogent products		
WV CSOs (drop-down menu)		
D.O.LI.1.01observe and explain how personal experience can influence the individual interpretation of a movement.	D.O.LI.1.03identify and conclude the distinguishing moment when movement becomes dance (when movement takes on purpose and intent it becomes	D O LI.2.01identify and practice locomotor and nonlocomotor/axial movements with an awareness of alignment.
Procedure: (Including Essential Question)		
TUES. Roll. Class syllabus/expectations. Codes/drills.		
WED. Familiarity games (ordering, truths/lies, interest inventory). Reflective writing prompt for grade. Verbal introduction to basic modern dance purpose and history.		
THURS. Change after roll. Begin warm up with 'negative space activities' and mirror, sculpture, clay prompts in pairs. WVDC workshops activities. Stretching. Basic elements of dance sheet.		
FRI. Change after roll. Reflections from yesterday. Warm up with WVDC activities. Brainstorming on movement qualities (loose, sticky, light, etc.). How do words, emotions, pictures, effect movement? How can the same movement be done in different ways?		

Figure 31. Year five modern lesson, August 2008.

LESSON PLAN for the 21st Century Classroom in Harrison County Schools		
Teacher: Morris	21st Century Tools: (drop-down menu)	
Course: <u>Dance</u>		
Date: <u>9/2-9/5/2008</u>		
21st Century Learning Skills: (drop-down menu)		
21C.O.9-12.3.LS1 Student remains composed and focused, even under stress, willingly aligns personal goals to goals of others, approaches conflict from win-win perspective, & derives personal satisfaction from achieving group goals.		
WV CSOs (drop-down menu)		
D.O.LI.1.01observe and explain how personal experience can influence the individual interpretation of a movement.	D.O.LI.1.02recognize and communicate abstract ideas through movement.	D.O.LI.2.01identify and practice locomotor and nonlocomotor/axial movements with an awareness of alignment.
Procedure: (Including Essential Question)		
TUES. Warm-up. Floor barre. Modern combo and adding on. Floor work. Discussion on movement to communicate abstract ideas.		
WED. Substitute. Readings on modern dance history and famous modern dancers. Inspiration icon worksheet.		
THURS. SUB-Discussion on yesterday's. SYTYCD video with questions.		
FRI. Warm-up. Floor combo. Across the floor. Given an object, list characteristics, qualities that can inspire movement and choreography. Use ball as an example. Brainstorm and develop 3 movements inspired by the ball. Discuss.		

Figure 32. Year five modern lesson continued, September 2008.

LESSON PLAN for the 21st Century Classroom in Harrison County Schools	
Teacher: <u>Morris</u>	21st Century Tools: (drop-down menu)
Course: <u>Dance</u>	
Date: <u>October 6-9, 2008</u>	
21st Century Learning Skills: (drop-down menu)	
21C.O.9-12.3.LS1 Student remains composed and focused, even under stress, willingly aligns personal goals to goals of others, approaches conflict from win-win perspective, & derives personal satisfaction from achieving group goals.	
WV CSOs (drop-down menu)	
D.O.LI.2.01 identify and practice locomotor and nonlocomotor/axial movements with an awareness of alignment.	D.O.LI.2.03 understand rhythm and timing as it relates to movement.
	D.O.LI.2.05 practice extended movement sequences.
Procedure: (Including Essential Question)	
Monday: Warm up and stretching. Intro to jazz dance movements. (isolations, across the floor work, basic kicks). Compare/contrast jazz and ballet pirouettes and other movements. Tuesday: Warm up and stretching. Review basic jazz movements. (add turns, more kicks, leaps) Cool down. Wednesday: Warm up and stretching. Across the floor work and short combos. Begin center combination and practice extended movement sequences. Will continue to add on tomorrow. Thursday: Warm up and stretching. Across the floor. Review floor combination. Add on. Practice in small groups and perform in those groups for the class. Critiques (self and group). What went well, what did not? What did I do well? What can I work on? Etc. Friday: ISE day.	

Figure 33. Year five jazz lesson, October 2008.

LESSON PLAN for the 21st Century Classroom in Harrison County Schools	
Teacher: Morris	21st Century Tools: (drop-down menu)
Course: <u>Dance</u>	21C.O.9-12.1.TT4 Student uses audio, video, pictures, clip art, moviemaker programs, webpage design software, electronic documents and other files to collaborate for the creation of electronic products.
Date: <u>December 1-5, 2008</u>	
21st Century Learning Skills: (drop-down menu)	
21C.O.9-12.2.LS4 Student visualizes connections and independently produces solutions; shows originality, concentration, commitment to completion, & persistence to develop unique & cogent products	
WV CSOs (drop-down menu)	
D.O.LI.7.02discuss how technology can be used to reinforce, enhance or alter the dance idea.	
Procedure: (Including Essential Question)	
Monday and Tuesday: Research and development in the TOC lab in groups of 2 as they create a proposal for a new dance tv show including specifics (ie judges, MC, style, etc) Wednesday: Presentation of proposals to class in library. Thursday and Friday: Hip hop intro and practice.	

Figure 34. Year five research project, December 2008.

LESSON PLAN for the 21st Century Classroom in Harrison County Schools		
Teacher: Morris	21st Century Tools: (drop-down menu)	
Course: Dance		
Date: March 16-20, 2009		
21st Century Learning Skills: (drop-down menu)		
21C.O.9-12.3.LS2 Student independently considers multiple perspectives, can represent a problem in more than one way, changes focus & goals as situation requires, and actively seeks innovations		
WV CSOs (drop-down menu)		
D.O.LI.4.01 perform and report on the history of culturally diverse dances.	D.O.LI.2.04 recognize and demonstrate the various dance concepts.	D.O.LI.2.03 understand rhythm and timing as it relates to movement.
Procedure: (Including Essential Question)		
Monday: Warm-up and jazz review. Across the floor. Written reflection on guest artist. Tuesday: History and brief intro of Irish dance. Short combination. Wednesday: Guest instructor...Zumba Thursday: Last day for jazz. Basic performance test for recognizing and performing steps. Stretching and cool down. Discuss using a great artist or work as inspiration for a new one. Friday: ABDC inspiration Thriller. Discuss.		

Figure 35. Year five lessons on jazz, international dance, guest instructor, and choreography inspiration, March 2009.

These examples support how I have grown as a curriculum planner and developer in dance. I understand as humans we are literate in numerous ways, through dance, through writing, through photography, and so on (Boal, 1985). I attempt to provide diverse experiences in the classroom that allow for personal levels of literacy and *how* students are intelligent. Analyzing and questioning are integral to engagement and authentic learning and students know more than we often give them credit for. Arts change the way people feel (McIntosh, 2007).

Programs over Time

With each performance I have been part of there has been a program documenting the contents and theme of the event, its performers, and other vital information to the production. Something as simple as a Xeroxed piece of paper listing the order of events and explanations is

important evidence in this study. You will find archived programs to follow (See Figures 36-38.).

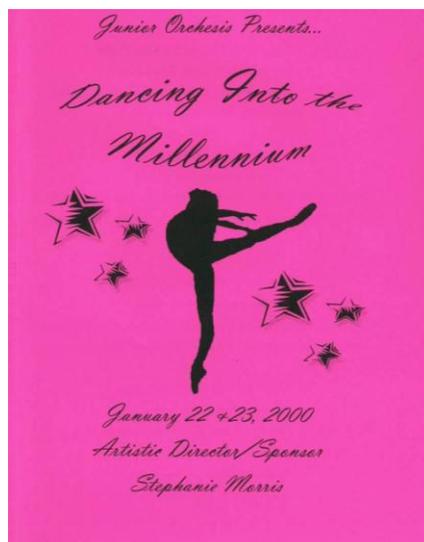


Figure 36. January 2000 program from the high school Junior Orchestis.

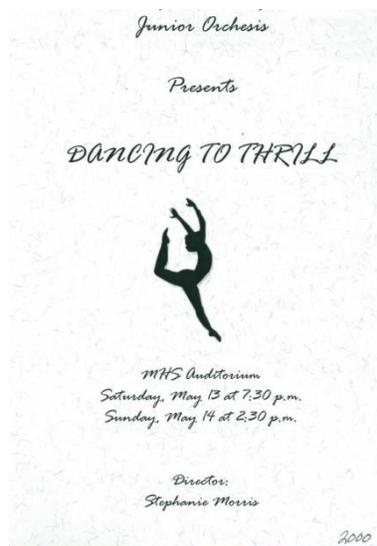
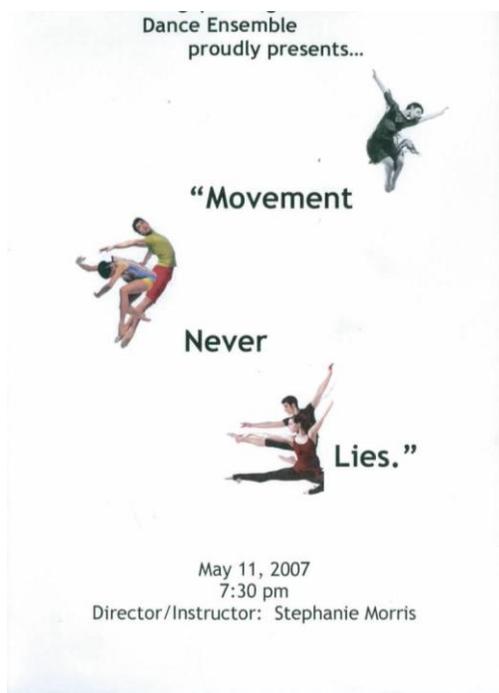


Figure 37. May 2000 program from the high school Junior Orchestras.



dancers who are committed to the improvement of their dance in all styles, including ballet, modern, jazz, and tap. Through various workshops, guest choreographers, and festivals in addition to daily class sessions, these thirteen dancers have experienced new styles and choreography and have improved their technique and performance.

Over the past semester they have been privileged to perform at a BHS boy's basketball game, the Morgantown Dance Spring Festival, and the NHS Talent Show. In addition, they attended performances and took workshops from the West Virginia Dance Company and the River North Chicago Dance Company. They hosted the WV Secondary Dance Alliance Conference in February, which was a state-wide event that promoted dance and dance education at the high school level. These girls also took classes and performed at the WV Dance Festival in Charleston. Here they studied with ballet master David Howard, American Ballet Theater dancers, and other masters in the fields of ballet, modern, and jazz in addition to performing with some of the best professional dance companies in the state.

Dance is one of the most valid forms of art and of expression. So much can be learned from movement. This class has allowed a number of students, who otherwise would not have had an outlet, to form connections not only with other technical dancers, but with other styles and disciplines. It has proven to be a truly valuable learning experience.

Figure 38. May 2007 program from the high school dance ensemble.

The programs provided as evidence illustrate the evolution of my definition of dance and its instruction. In the early programs I designed it was all about an apparent and simple show theme, the dancers, and their songs. By 2007 I had developed a much deeper definition of dance and expressive movement as evident in the title of the show. Also it is apparent through the explanation in Figure 38 that experience in dance education had grown in importance to me and the notion of dance is a powerful concept.

Sentimental Pieces

Some of the most valuable items in one's life cost the least amount of money. I have saved numerous cards, notes, pictures, and more from my students and performers. From the first thank you card that changed my life from my dancers in the high school Junior Orchestis to

those of my current dancers, each piece is sacred and an important artifact of my journey. A few examples are provided in Figures 39-44.

you did a good on J.O. this year, and making it a great show.

Thanks, [redacted]

Thanks alot Steph. You're great!

Dear Stephanie, Steph, You did a wonderful job! The dances are great! You made J.O. so much fun. Thanks so much. [redacted] You were great! Thanks for everything!

Thank you so much for everything you did a great job! [redacted]

Thanks for keeping J.O. fun! I think the show turned out great!

Since this is my 1st yr. in J.O I didn't know what it was. I can truly say you've made it such a fun & great experience! [redacted] Stephanie

J.O. was a [redacted] rene enjoyable experience. Thank you. [redacted]

You are soooo R+D I love it. You have awesome choreography! Bravissimo!

well done!

You did a great job on producing such a wonderful show! Thanks a million [redacted]

Thank you so much Stephanie! You've done a great job and still make it fun! Thanks [redacted]

Thank you so much! You did a great job! [redacted]

the good work. Thanks for being there and believing in my work! dan c. h. s. Love [redacted]

Figure 39. January 2000 note from Junior Orchesis dancers.

my high school career. I thought it was just some after school activity that would take up a few hours every week, but it has been so much more than that. I have loved being so involved beyond just showing up to practice, with choreographing dances and being an officer. All the friends I have made through JO and all the good times I have had make even the worst times totally worth it. You have become a friend of mine, and it will be so sad next year when I won't see you two times a week.

Thank you for always believing in me when others had their doubts. I really have enjoyed JO because it allows everyone involved to be creative and grow in dancing ability, as well as making new friendships and strengthening the old ones. Thank you for always being there for all of us.

Figure 40. May 2004 note from Junior Orchestis dancer.

May 25, 2007

Dear Stephanie,

"Thank you" seems inadequate for all that you have done for [redacted]. I have thanked God so many times in the past year for the opportunity that you created with the formation of the Dance Ensemble. Dancing has always been [redacted]'s solace and her refuge. Through Dance Ensemble, you not only salvaged her senior year, you made it the best year of all! You've given ~~the~~ memories that we will truly cherish. I'm certain that the Dance Ensemble will continue to grow and thanks to you, the →

future is bright for the dancers of BHS. Thanks you again for giving [redacted] the opportunity to do what she loves most in life... dance! I will be forever grateful!



 Paint Puddles
©2006 Dance Medium
www.paint-puddles.com

Love + God Bless,

Figure 41. May 2007 note from dance ensemble mother.

March 4, 2008

Dear Ms. Morris,

First of all I just want to tell you how much of an amazing role model you have been for me. You have helped me through so much I there is no way I could have gotten through on my own. You were there to listen when I needed you, but never pressed me to say more than I was comfortable saying. You have helped me so much in becoming a more confident dancer, too. Last year when you gave me a solo it was the first one I had ever had. You were the first teacher that believed in me to pull it off, and that was all I needed. I only needed that one teacher to give me a boost of confidence to push harder.

Now, onto the dance portion. I love being able to experience different techniques from different teachers. I also love having the experience of having a modern class, since our studio does not teach modern. Thank you for using levels of difficulty so the choreograph you give each of us is fit to the level we are on. I like that you use different styles and the whole dance is not just booty shaking. There is actual dancing involved which is not always what you get around here. So many people are afraid to break out of the box because our town is so small and narrow-minded. I also love that you use music that is not used very often. Music that you have to search for and really find that gives you the right feeling.

Again thank you soo much for being there for me when I need you, and knowing when all I need to do is dance.

Figure 42. March 2008 note from dance ensemble student.

Ms. Morris,

Where do I begin?? You are such an amazing woman and an awesome teacher. Thank you for always being there when I needed you. I am so glad I got to participate in your dance classes. I have many memories that I will never forget. Thank you for letting me be your TA I really enjoyed it. Thank you for always encouraging me to use my imagination and be creative. Now thanks to you I love dance and everything that has to do with it. You played a big role in making my high school experience unforgettable. Thank you so very much.

Yours Truly,

Figure 43. May 2008 note from Dance I and II student.

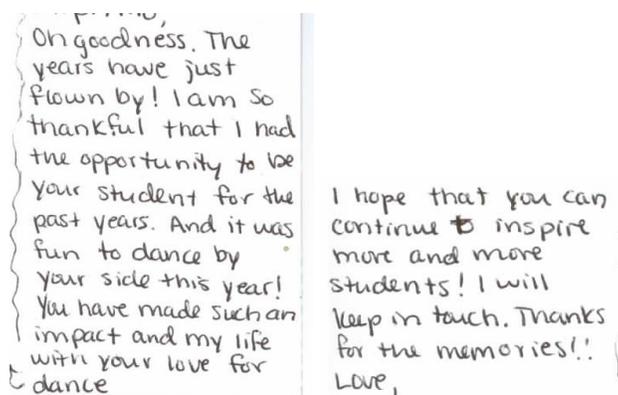


Figure 44. May 2009 note from dance ensemble student.

These artifacts are very powerful pieces of evidence as they support the relational nature of dance and dance education. Dance educators' roles differ from other concept teachers. We are actively involved in the task we are teaching; we do what we teach. This intense involvement lends itself to stronger relationships with students. The examples of notes above illustrate this notion.

One Dancer's Look at Another

Through observations of the professor and director of dance at West Virginia University I gained insight into my life and work. Within the field of dance, one is most often either taking or teaching classes. Very rarely does one sit, observe, and take note of what is going on in the dance studio. However, I had the opportunity to do this in the fall of 2008. These experiences made me reflect on my work and to ask questions about her classes, my classes, and dance in general that I had never thought to address.

During my first observation in August of 2008 at 5:00 pm, I sat on a chair on the outside of the dance floor. This was one of the first meetings of this Advanced Modern Technique class for the semester. I initially made note of the quality of the dance space available to the university-level dancers. A sprung-hardwood floor covered in marley (a surface dancers use that provides traction and protection for the dancers' bodies), mirrors, dressing rooms readily available, ample ballet barres, nice sound equipment, etc. My high school students perform on a concrete-based, wooden basketball court. We have only three ballet barres for over 30 students, a boom box, no mirrors, and locker rooms. The space at the university was designed with dance in mind. At the high school level, dance was never considered in the design. We are expected to be flexible to fit the existing sports-inspired mold. Yet, I find we are content just to have the ability to experience dance and roll with whatever we are given (which is very minimal).

Dancers entered the studio in silence. [This silence is so different from high school!] I noticed that these dancers (1 male and 18 females) were much more disciplined as they began self-stretches and preparing for class without being prompted. High school dance classes seem to have a much more social component. As the silence continued I asked myself, "What is each dancer thinking? Where have they each come from? What have they done today?" Those are questions I rarely find myself considering as I am preparing to teach my dance classes. I am very focused on my role as the teacher and what I will be leading the students through. However, recognizing their states of mind may make my teaching more effective.

Heather entered the dance floor and automatically everyone faced the same direction. They knew class was beginning. They were instructed to begin on their backs for floor barre. As they were instructed to take a deep breath Heather prompted them to exhale, "letting the rest

of the day go.” She weaved in and out of the dancers as she gave verbal instructions and made a few individual corrections by touch. I find similarities in her presentation and mine. Dance teachers use their entire bodies to teach. We give directions orally, use our own bodies to model, make corrections through touch as we make our way around the room, etc. Of course, at the high school level the concept of correcting by touch can be a tender topic.

I noticed the same language being used in Heather’s class as in mine; confirming my belief that dance itself has a distinct language and is a language in and of itself. Her voice began to gain beat, like music. As she modeled a long movement phrase she used humor as after the first showing she asked, “Everyone got that?” Laughter resounded. Again, a similarity; at the high school level I find humor to be an essential teaching tool. She then repeated the movement phrase and the dancers joined in and mimicked her movement to learn the combination. “It should feel like a jellyfish.” Imagery is a powerful tool while teaching dance. Heather and I both realize this as evident in her verbal instructions about the quality and feeling of the movement.

The dancers then rehearsed and performed the movement phrase to music. I found many of them rushing their phrases, going ahead of the counts. [Is this a sign of our rushed culture?] Heather constantly reminded them to “take it slow. Relax.” As the class continued I noted that the dancers were watching their individual selves in the mirrors. [Where would they look if the mirrors did not exist?] The corrections by touch continued and I found myself not looking so much at the correction but at the look on the dancers’ faces as each instance occurred. It seemed that the dancers felt special when Heather made a correction on them. They often smiled, said thank you, or glanced at the instructor with gratitude. I never noticed this with my students as I

am focusing on their correction, not the way I am making them feel. However, making students feel special, important, and valued is, in my opinion, a very essential component of education. Just then Heather announced, “I love when I walk over to you to make a correction and all I have to do is come near and you, boom, fix it.” She was referring to a situation in which one dancer was arching her back in a plie (bending of the knees) and as Heather approached the dancer, the dancer knew what she was doing incorrectly and made the adjustment.

After a short review of a combination learned last class, the dancers rehearsed a different extended movement phrase. After the first run-through Heather challenged the dancers to “see if you can dance it. Make it as big as you can.” [When do I see or believe that it is danced? And, do we keep it small because we are conscious of our bodies/ourselves?] There was extreme focus as the music played. Heather turned to me, “Can you see the difference when they *move* it?” “A huge difference,” I responded with excitement. There was a distinct change in energy and feeling the second time around.

Heather then directed the dancers to the side of the studio as they prepared to travel across the floor performing various steps. She gave the students basic movements, the same ones that I give my dancers. As they danced across, some of them giggled to themselves as they messed up. [My kids do this all of the time.] Some of the dancers used the whole space, while others walked off early. [Is this a result of frustration?] Heather then addressed individual questions. [There are such varying motivations and drives in the class. Do individuals’ ways of coming to know influence this?] They prepared to perform across the floor one more time, this time in larger groups as instructed. Heather yelled out, “Match the energy of the music. Don’t

let it beat you.” As they danced Heather advised, “If you mess up look like you meant to do it. It is good practice for life and performance.” [So true!]

A new section of the class began as a new combination was taught. Many of the dancers seemed overwhelmed with the fast, new choreography. I heard, “Oh my gosh! What?” [Just like my kids!] As they rehearsed the new combination Heather modeled certain parts shouting, “with urgency! Make it intentional.” The music changed now. It was very slow. Silence blanketed studio. [How much of a role does the music we choose affect our mood as dancers?] The class wrapped up through a cool-down. Heather’s voice changed, along with her intonation and voice quality, to match the moment and the new music. As they were stretching I noticed the stages of flexibility of the dancers just as I had noticed the levels of ability earlier in the class. The music ended. Everyone clapped then staggered out. A few came up to speak with Heather and others went back to the couch to put cover-up clothes on and exit the studio.

I observed the same Advanced Modern Technique class a few weeks later. Even though it was the same class with the same instructor and students I noticed different aspects of the dance classroom. The class was much more vocal with each other at the beginning of the class. [May be this is a result of it being later in the semester and students have had time to form relationships and are more comfortable with each other. They are much more like my students in this aspect.] Class began with roll call. Then Heather shouted, “Let’s dance!”

Heather’s imagery continued to provide humor and great metaphors for her students and their movement. She used phrases in class such as, “like squashing marshmallows and parallel like a railroad track.” She explained that relevés (going up on one’s toes) are a dancer’s truth serum. She led them through a very yoga-like warm-up. “Listen to your body. It is not a

contest.” [I often tell my dancers this. They feel the desire to constantly compete with each other.] Heather was so successful at balancing her instruction between modeling and voice. Too much of one, I believe, can make or break a classes’ chemistry. Heather prompted the dancers with a question. “Listen carefully. What time signature is this?” [Interesting, I never address that.] “Listen to what your body is doing. It is in 5/4 time. We are so used to 4/4 that small things like this can really challenge us mentally and physically as dancers.” [Wow.]

While watching the dancers finish warm-ups and work on a combination I found myself asking, “Are we dance teachers because we are a like or are we alike because we are dance teachers? How much does habit come into play?” As I honed my attention back to the dance floor I noticed Heather not saying a word, just pointing in the direction where the dancers had started the combination. With this single bodily expression the students knew they had to return to their starting point to perform again this specific movement phrase. They knew they had messed up. They showed much concentration as they danced the second time through. [How do we show stern corrections without discouraging our dancers, especially at the high school level where many students have no dance experience? How do we address technique without influencing the spirit of the movement?]

Heather started the students on a turn combination across the floor. She encouraged them to modify on their own. For example, if they were weaker in turns stick to a single or challenge yourself to a double or triple if you can. [There is a lot of self-awareness and truth in this type of task. You must know your body.] Some of the students seemed to challenge themselves while others remained at the status quo, much like in other situations in life. [Sometimes it is hard as a teacher to keep up your energy, to perform 100 percent all class. We have to though.]

As the class came to an end they worked on an extended combination revisited and adapted each class. Although they rehearsed the same combination to the same song, today Heather made different groups start at different points in the song. This was to evoke different expressions and emphasize different sections of the music. [The feeling of the music and choreography is so important. Personal experience may play a role. Why does person x feel more at a certain point than person y?] The class ended with a short cool down.

Another time I had the opportunity to experience and observe Heather's work was during her students' choreography proposals in the fall of 2008. Each student was permitted to submit a piece of work. He or she had to provide an explanation or motivation for the work and its style, the number of dancers requested for performance, costuming, lighting, pieces of movement as examples, etc. This was very interesting piece to be present for. Their proposals were much more detailed and thoughtful than anything my students had done. I am referring to my auditioned group (dance ensemble) in this situation as my regular dance education classes work on student choreography, but not for a concert setting such as this. The following semester I required my ensemble dancers to submit a similar proposal. I appreciated the idea of assigning these pre-performance thoughts and explanations. It made the design of the movement more meaningful and challenged my dancers in their creations.

Some of the choreography ideas presented interested me. One student submitted an idea based on a shadow play. Throughout the piece the dancers would interact with shadows created on the stage to represent the struggle between the real and the society-deemed "ideal." Another piece was based on laughter and the banter between sisters focusing on various melodies and timing. Varieties of music were presented ranging from local acoustic artists to Broadway-style

jazz. The most interesting part for me was envisioning and understanding the unique movement ideas of these diverse dancers from both my and their perspectives. It helped me to realize what not only they bring but what my students bring to the rehearsal and performance space.

Throughout the explanation of these observations I often mentioned commonalities between Heather and me, for example the language used during instruction, the use of our entire bodies to teach, and making corrections on dancers through touch and modeling. I did not mention in the body some of the differences we have. As dancers Heather and I have different backgrounds and training. She holds a terminal degree in dance but I do not hold any degree in dance. I have studied and trained at private studios, workshops, and through my work in the field of public education. Heather has experience in higher education and little to none in public education. Although we both focus on modern/contemporary dance, her training gives her a much more solid foundation in her choreography work. We work with different students who are at different levels in their experiences with dance but our goals are the same, to open up their eyes to the power of dance and the implications of dance on one's life.

Assignments and Assessment over Time

The process of the development of the dance curriculum has been a long road with many turns and unexpected stops. As far as I am concerned there is no end in sight as good curriculum is always changing and evolving. To follow are a few examples of student assignments and assessment pieces over time (See Figures 45-52.).

Ballet Test

Name: _____

A. Match each word with its correct definition.

_____ grand plie	1. pointing the foot while keeping floor contact
_____ en dehors	2. sustained in turning
_____ fondu	3. front to back in a circular motion
_____ developpe	4. a jump in which one foot chases the other
_____ grand battement	5. a full bending of the knees
_____ tombe	6. extending the leg through passe
_____ chasse	7. to melt
_____ pirouette	8. a big kick with the working leg
_____ soutenue	9. falling
_____ tendu	10. a complete turn of the body on one foot

B. Define each term below in complete sentences.

1. barre
2. grand jete
3. arabesque
4. port de bras
5. rond de jambe

C. Choice the best answer for each question.

1. When a dancer is on releve, she
 - a. is in fifth position on her toes
 - b. is in any position on her toes
 - c. is in first position on her toes
2. A chasse is a
 - a. turn
 - b. leap
 - c. jump

Figure 45. Year one ballet test.

Answer each question sufficiently with complete sentences.

1. Which is more important during grand battements, height or alignment? Why?
2. Why is barre work so important for the dancer?
3. Why are arms so important in ballet?
4. Explain what ballet taught you most.
5. What is your opinion of ballet? Has it changed?

Figure 46. Year two ballet assignment.

Research Requirements for Dance

- I. Basic requirements
 - a. Typed and double-spaced
 - b. Times New Roman, 12 point font
 - c. Title and bibliography pages
 - d. 2 pages

- II. Introduction, Body, and Conclusion
 - a. Introduction
 - 1. Topic and brief overview
 - b. Body
 - 1. History
 - 2. Time line
 - 3. Significant contributions to dance
 - 4. Other dancers/choreographers worked with
 - 5. Personal accomplishments (including performances)
 - 6. Interesting facts
 - c. Conclusion
 - 1. Rehash of important information
 - 2. *Personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions*

- III. Suggestions
 - a. Keep it interesting.
 - b. DO NOT PLAGERIZE! (This includes copying and pasting and changing a word here or there.)

I will be reading your papers carefully for content and possible plagiarism. It is important that you learn how to gather information then organize and create a *unique* paper in your own words! I would rather read a paper with 'normal' words than one where the writer tried to be fancy and use the thesaurus for every word. I care about the information **YOU** find and what **YOU** have to say about the dancer/topic, not other people. Please take this into consideration as I will be focusing on it.

- IV. Oral presentation
 - a. 3-5 minutes
 - b. You may use one index card for reference, not reading.
 - c. Be prepared to answer questions. You should know your topic well.

Figure 47. Years one and two research assignment.

ABC wants to produce a new dance show. They have decided to allow anyone who has an idea to present to the producers. The presentations are to be done on Power Point and are to include the following information:

1. Name of show
2. Set-up/structure of show (including chosen genre or genres of dance)
3. Contestant qualifications (How do you get on the show?)
4. How do dancers get eliminated on the show?
5. What is the purpose of the show? What are you looking for?
6. How does a dancer win? What does the winner receive?
7. What 3 judges would you use (dead or alive)? Why? Support your choices with background information, experience, and relation to the show's goals.
8. Who will be the MC or announcer on the show? Why?
9. Where will the show be filmed?
10. Other interesting ideas/information

Figure 48. Year three assignment.

Name: _____ YouTube articles

1. Have you ever used YouTube? If so, how often do you use it? What do you watch on it?
2. Have you ever used YouTube to get ideas for something? What?
3. When was YouTube created?
4. What company owns YouTube today?
5. Why is Universal Tube and Rollform Equipment so upset with YouTube?
6. Do you think political candidates should be allowed to use YouTube to campaign? Why or why not?
7. Why do you think some countries banned YouTube? Do you agree? Why or why not?
8. Who is Smosh?
9. List the influence of each dance.
European ballet *popular peasant dances*

Don Quixote

Piazzolla Caldera

Baltimore Sponge Bob
10. **In a one page essay on the back of this page...** *The Inspiration for Choreography* article talks about how YouTube has influenced the dance world. In your own words, summarize this influence. How has it changed dance, etc.? Support your answer. Then explain how you think YouTube has influenced your life/the culture of your world. What is the future of YouTube? What else in the world does/will it affect?

Figure 49. Year three assignment.

Combining Dance and Visual Art...The Final Project

As our class comes to a close we reflect upon the many genres of dance that we have experienced, including ballet, jazz, modern, hip hop, and ballroom. For this final group project you will be combining the art of dance with visual art. Because this project is about communication and abstract ideas we will be using modern dance. Take a minute to think back on the 4 basic elements of dance and how we addressed them in class (body, space, force, and time). These will be important as you design your final presentation. Your group will be given a reproduction of a painting. You are to analyze this painting. Some questions you may ask yourself are:

1. What level is the design on?
2. What direction or directions does the design move in?
3. Are the lines sharp or smooth?
4. How do the colors affect you?
5. What is the flow of the painting?
6. What is/are the themes?
7. Are there patterns in the work? Describe.
8. What are other outstanding aspects of the painting? What are aspects that strike you as different, funny, odd, or beautiful?

These are just jumping off ideas. You may notice other interesting things. Once your group has discussed the painting using the questions above and making other observations you need to think about answering these same questions through movement. In other words, can you dance the design?

Attached you will find some resources that may help you generate ideas. Remember this is a performance piece and will be presented on the stage in the auditorium. You can use the wings for entrances and exits before, during, and at the end of the piece. The last four pages of this packet are ways in which I will be grading this project. This is on your six weeks grade. Remember your assembly dance was your final so your six weeks grade is still being considered and this is a major component.

Requirements:

1. A one page, typed explanation of your analysis of the art work, your choreographic ideas and process, the movements of your piece, difficulties in the process, and other items addressed in the process of the project. (one per group)
2. Within your group you are going to design a 1 minute and 30 second modern performance piece. You may bring in music if you wish, but the music **may not** be a popular song. It must represent the art work. You may also choose to perform without music.

Figure 50. Year four project.

Group 3

Honing our skill as choreographers...

For this project I challenge you to be creative and critical in your design. You have several resources attached:

1. Your notes from the "Composition" chapter in our text.
2. Choreographic structure ideas and definitions
3. Literal to abstract movement ideas and suggestions

Your task:

Your group is to use the poem and pictures for inspiration. The poem and pictures may contradict or contrast, but that is okay. It is your group's interpretation/perception of the items that will fuel your movement design.

You may use *instrumental* music, but it is your option to use music or not. Your focus should be the choreography.

The style for this project is modern. Remember the basic elements of dance (body, space, force, and time). Utilize different levels, the entire floor space, various body parts, moves, and steps, timing, direction, focus, etc. You are not acting out the poem verbatim nor living "in" the picture. There is no "correct" or "incorrect" choreography if you can explain and back it up.

Your piece will be performed on the stage in the gym. It must be between 1:45 and 2:00 minutes with a distinct beginning, middle, and end.

You must utilize at least three choreographic structures.

Vary your speed, patterns, formations, movements, etc. Consider your audience and making your presentation enjoyable and entertaining.

Schedule:

Work days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

Performance day: Friday (no time for work will be given this day)

TOTAL PROJECT = 200pts Rehearsal: 40pts Performance: 100pts
 Critique of others: 20pts Critique of self: 20pts Explanation of work: 20pts

I will be much harder on my grading of this project. I want you to be analytical, creative, and interpretive, not lazy or goofing around. You can do it! Have fun and I look forward to watching you work!

Figure 51. Year five project part one.

Name: _____ Poem: _____

1. Summarize your poem. What were the general theme, mood, and subject?
2. Did your choreography match this theme/subject? How? What elements or kinds of movements did you use to represent these ideas from your poem? Explain.
3. If you were in the audience, would you like your piece? Why or why not? Would you think it was entertaining?
4. In your opinion, what makes a dance performance entertaining?
5. What was one thing you gained from this assignment?
6. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the similarities?
7. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the differences?
8. If you had to do this project again with the same poem, what would you change? What would you keep the same?

Figure 52. Year five project part two.

In assessing students' work I notice various elements. These elements develop in terms of complexity as the semester progresses. In the beginning phases of students' dance education experiences I evaluate their understanding of what movement has the potential to be, specifically communicative and expressive notions. I also assess the new and diverse ways they begin to move their bodies through space in addition to understanding historical connections. As the semester progresses I pay notice to the connections they form between dance and other subjects and areas of their lives; also, their personal evaluations of what is good and aesthetically pleasing

and their explanations of such in addition to their reflections of themselves and others. Finally, are the students improving in the movement of their bodies, for example, proper alignment and technique?

Assessing this art presents many challenges. In an environment where students are trained to give the teacher the ‘correct’ answer, I struggle to get students to understand the value of their own opinions and thoughts and the simple expression of such. Similarly, as the students have existed in a motionless state of learning for so long, getting them to begin to move their bodies, let alone dance, can present a challenge. As the semester goes on, I see them starting to ‘get it,’ to regain some notions of creativity and living in and through their bodies.

Unfortunately, when I get them to the point they feel comfortable in themselves and their freedom of expression it seems the semester has come to an end. I only hope that these notions are not squandered and live on in them as they journey through the remainder of their high school experiences.

Students’ Work in the Art

Examples of student work provide evidence of change in my work in dance education. All pieces provided as artifacts below (See Figures 53-59.) are existing student work and were assigned and assessed as part of the normal dance education curriculum.

1. How does the US dance culture of the time differ from that of Cuba? Explain.

The U.S. dance style is more ballroom and structured dancing, whereas the Cuban dance style is more free and loose and uses salsa dancing.

2. What styles of dance do you see in the video? ballroom, tango, salsa, freestyle

3. In the eyes of the teenagers, is there a difference of values? In other words, what do the two main characters value as important in life? Who do you agree with more? Why?

Katie, the girl, valued school in the movie and Javier valued dancing. Katie because she was focusing on her future.

4. What did you notice about the roles of leader and follower as you watched the dancing?

The leader has a very important role but so does the follower; they both have to be on cue or the dance won't be successful.

Figure 53. Student reflection on *Dirty Dancing Havana Nights*.

1. How does the US dance culture of the time differ from that of Cuba? Explain.
 In America the government is not as strict and they aren't exposed to the type of dancing such as the dancing in Cuba, and in Cuba there are problems going on within the government so they are very strict and when it comes to dancing they are more into free movements of the body and feeling the music.
2. What styles of dance do you see in the video?
 ballroom, freestyle, salsa, mambo, and latin ballroom.
3. In the eyes of the teenagers, is there a difference of values? In other words, what do the two main characters value as important in life? Who do you agree with more? Why?
 For Javier he has to focus on having money but also express himself through dance, and for the girl whatever has expenses is handed to her and she studies a lot without knowing how to have fun. Javier sees that having a good work ethic and being able to find a way to relieve his emotions, and the girl sees school being the biggest deal in her life. I agree with Javier more because working for what you have teaches you to appreciate what you have.
4. What did you notice about the roles of leader and follower as you watched the dancing?
 The leader directs the dance in a way while the follower has to be free flowing and trust the movement of the leader. At parts of the dance the motions are the same but some are conflicting of each other.

Figure 54. Student reflection on *Dirty Dancing Havana Nights*.

1. Summarize your poem. What were the general theme, mood, and subject?
 nature vs. human if mankind
 (birds, frog, trees) died nature would flourish
 but we'd die without nature
2. Did your choreography match this theme/subject? How? What elements or kinds of movements did you use to represent these ideas from your poem? Explain.
 yes. we used high, middle and low levels to represent the poem. we used reap frog and arms like birds to represent frog and swallows. we used all of the stage.
3. If you were in the audience, would you like your piece? Why or why not? Would you think it was entertaining?
 yes I would've enjoyed it but if I could do it again, we could've had more variety at the beginning.
4. In your opinion, what makes a dance performance entertaining?
 A lot of movement and different levels of dance.
5. What was one thing you gained from this assignment?
 I gained knowledge of how to take a poem + interpret it into dance.
6. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the similarities?
 one group in our class did the same circle as the black.
 the bird poem → both groups made a caged circle around the bird and used same way/movements to try to escape
7. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the differences?
 both of the classes interpreted the poems differently so the movements were all different.
8. If you had to do this project again with the same poem, what would you change? What would you keep the same?
 I would change the beginning and maybe add more from the poem and pictures.

Figure 55. Student reflection on group interdisciplinary choreography project, finding inspiration for movement from poetry.

1. Summarize your poem. What were the general theme, mood, and subject?
A bird feels trapped. He is in a cage and he can not get out and be free. The mood changes throughout the poem. He admires the outside world, then is upset and tries to get out and gets angry, then he is mellow and prays to become free.
2. Did your choreography match this theme/subject? How? What elements or kinds of movements did you use to represent these ideas from your poem? Explain.
Yes our choreography matched the theme of our poem. We would be flying when he admired the outside world and when the bird felt trapped we trapped someone in. We represented the bars when the bird wanted to get out and we were flying when it was happier.
3. If you were in the audience, would you like your piece? Why or why not? Would you think it was entertaining?
Yes because I feel like our group made the best dance for that piece so that you could understand what was going on.
4. In your opinion, what makes a dance performance entertaining?
A dance performance is entertaining when there is a lot of movement and everything flows together.
5. What was one thing you gained from this assignment?
We all learned how to challenge ourself and push ourself to make a dance to a poem. We all worked together to create a dance that had to be a certain time.
6. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the similarities?
The other class also put the roll into their dance. They also represented the poles. They trapped the person in like we did and theirs was very similar to ours.
7. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the differences?
We had more movements while as they repeated the same movement over and over again. We were always moving as they did the same thing for longer periods of time.
8. If you had to do this project again with the same poem, what would you change? What would you keep the same?
I would have changed the middle where [redacted] was in the middle and the guys were just sitting there and me and [redacted] were doing the only dancing. I would have kept the rest of the dance.

Figure 56. Student reflection on group interdisciplinary choreography project, finding inspiration for movement from poetry.

1. Summarize your poem. What were the general theme, mood, and subject? rains
Our poem was about nature. It was trying to portray that nature would flourish and function without humans but humans would perish without nature. Calm.
2. Did your choreography match this theme/subject? How? What elements or kinds of movements did you use to represent these ideas from your poem? Explain.
Yes. In the beginning we played the rain game. This revealed the mood "calm". We also showed how nature would flourish without humans and humans can not live without nature.
3. If you were in the audience, would you like your piece? Why or why not? Would you think it was entertaining?
Yes, because it had meaning to it. If the audience didn't understand the poem they might not understand our dance.
4. In your opinion, what makes a dance performance entertaining?
Timing, I think. It's what makes a performance entertaining. Also if the dance tells a story and is understanding to the audience.
5. What was one thing you gained from this assignment?
I learned that when using a poem to choreograph a dance, the dance has more meaning when you show the mood of the poem instead of just playing on the words.
6. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the similarities?
Some similarities included the swallowing of birds. They also acted like trees.
7. As you watched the performance of the other class with the same poem, what were some of the differences?
The other class focused more on the words of the poem more than the meaning. They played with the words.
8. If you had to do this project again with the same poem, what would you change? What would you keep the same?
We would incorporate more dance moves into our dance. I would keep everything else the same because it explained what the poem was really about.

Figure 57. Student reflection on group interdisciplinary choreography project, finding inspiration for movement from poetry.

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork
 Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Instructions

- Use the following rubric to evaluate one of these two aspects:
 a. My teamwork
 b. The teamwork of a peer
 Name of peer _____
- Total the points from the last column and place the total score in the box at the bottom.

Teamwork skills	1. None of the time	2. Some of the time	3. Most of the time	4. All of the time	Points
Offers assistance to others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Listens to the ideas of others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Contributes to the group work.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Exchanges, defends, and refines ideas.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Raises and discusses questions with the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Encourages and supports the ideas and efforts of other team members.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Offers to perform additional tasks and reports findings to the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Assumes a leadership role.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Total points:					

23 to 32 = above standard
 17 to 24 = at standard
 0 to 16 = needs improvement

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork (Form 10.5) is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series.

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork
 Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Instructions

- Use the following rubric to evaluate one of these two aspects:
 a. My teamwork
 b. The teamwork of a peer
 Name of peer _____
- Total the points from the last column and place the total score in the box at the bottom.

Teamwork skills	1. None of the time	2. Some of the time	3. Most of the time	4. All of the time	Points
Offers assistance to others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Listens to the ideas of others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Contributes to the group work.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Exchanges, defends, and refines ideas.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Raises and discusses questions with the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Encourages and supports the ideas and efforts of other team members.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Offers to perform additional tasks and reports findings to the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Assumes a leadership role.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Total points:					

23 to 32 = above standard
 17 to 24 = at standard
 0 to 16 = needs improvement

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork (Form 10.5) is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series.

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork
 Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Instructions

- Use the following rubric to evaluate one of these two aspects:
 a. My teamwork
 b. The teamwork of a peer
 Name of peer _____
- Total the points from the last column and place the total score in the box at the bottom.

Teamwork skills	1. None of the time	2. Some of the time	3. Most of the time	4. All of the time	Points
Offers assistance to others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Listens to the ideas of others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Contributes to the group work.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Exchanges, defends, and refines ideas.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Raises and discusses questions with the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Encourages and supports the ideas and efforts of other team members.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Offers to perform additional tasks and reports findings to the team.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Assumes a leadership role.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Total points:					

23 to 32 = above standard
 17 to 24 = at standard
 0 to 16 = needs improvement

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork (Form 10.5) is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series.

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork
 Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Instructions

- Use the following rubric to evaluate one of these two aspects:
 a. My teamwork
 b. The teamwork of a peer
 Name of peer _____
- Total the points from the last column and place the total score in the box at the bottom.

Teamwork skills	1. None of the time	2. Some of the time	3. Most of the time	4. All of the time	Points
Offers assistance to others.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Listens to the ideas of others.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Contributes to the group work.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Exchanges, defends, and refines ideas.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Raises and discusses questions with the team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Encourages and supports the ideas and efforts of other team members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Offers to perform additional tasks and reports findings to the team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Assumes a leadership role.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Total points:					

23 to 32 = above standard
 17 to 24 = at standard
 0 to 16 = needs improvement

Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork (Form 10.5) is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series. It is a member of the Form 10.5 Series.

Figure 58. Student self and group evaluations on group interdisciplinary choreography project, finding inspiration for movement from poetry.

The figure displays four copies of Form 10.5, 'Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork'. Each form is a peer evaluation tool with the following structure:

- Header:** Form 10.5 Student Worksheet—Evaluation of Teamwork. Name: [Redacted], Class: [Redacted], Date: [Redacted].
- Instructions:**
 - Use the following rubric to evaluate one of these two aspects:
 - Any teamwork.
 - The teamwork of a peer. Name of peer: [Redacted].
 - Total the points from the last column and place the total score in the box at the bottom.
- Rubric Table:**

Teamwork skills	1: None of the time	2: Some of the time	3: Most of the time	4: All of the time	Points
Offers assistance to others			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Listens to the ideas of others			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contributes to the group work			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exchanges, defends, and refines ideas			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poses and discusses questions with the team		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Encourages and supports the ideas and efforts of other team members			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Offers to perform additional tasks and reports findings to the team			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assumes a leadership role			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Total points					24
- Legend:**
 - 23 to 32 = above standard
 - 17 to 24 = at standard
 - 0 to 16 = needs improvement

The four forms show the following total scores: 24, 22, 28, and 20.

Figure 59. Student self and group evaluations on group interdisciplinary choreography project, finding inspiration for movement from poetry.

Conclusion

The pieces of evidence presented to you have been carefully selected to represent the transformation of my perceptions and notions about dance and dance education over time. The assignments and assessments I give to my students today, in comparison to my first year or two teaching, attempt to incorporate aspects of their daily lives and concepts that expand beyond dance. The projects also encourage reflection and ideas for improvement, concepts imperative

for their lives in and out of the classroom. With this assessment data I am able to constantly adjust assignments, instruction, and curriculum to meet the needs and interests of my students in the dance classroom. I now step back and analyze this data. In Chapter 5, I will explain emerging themes as they occur to me through the heuristic process as I address my research questions of; how has dance and movement influenced my journey and how has this influence affected the high school experience of my students?

Chapter 5: Making Sense of It All

Maxine Greene talks about the importance of teachers being wide-awake. She mentions that if teachers are not critically conscious, if they are not awake to their own values and commitments, if they are not personally engaged in their subject matter and with the world around, I do not see how they can initiate the young into critical questioning or the moral life (Greene, 1978, p. 48). Going into this study I knew I was passionate about its subject and excited to understand its influence on me and my students. As I gathered pieces of evidence though I had no idea how interconnected everything in my life was and just how much influence previous events had on subsequent ones. This dissertation made me wide-awake and conscious as a dancer, as a dance educator, and as a human.

For guidance in writing my conclusion, I returned to the heuristic research model as a framework as I reflected on my guiding questions of: How has dance and movement influenced my journey? How has this influence affected the high school experience of my students? Dance and movement have led me on a journey living in and through the steps of heuristic inquiry of immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis as described by Moustakas (1990). Although I cannot answer why these events happened, I will explain how these experiences affected me and my students.

My Life through the Heuristic Process

As I dissected my personal narrative I found myself categorizing the stages of my life, aligning them with the same processes of the heuristic research model presented in Patton (2002). I understand my personal journey as five stages, one leading into the next. (See Figure 60.) These stages are representative of specific periods in time that line up with locations of

residence. These locations affect school and dance studio enrollment. The stages or periods of my life that I will explain further are focused on my life in relation to dance and movement.



Figure 60. Stages of my life (as a dancer) in years as it occurs to me through the stages of heuristic inquiry.

Immersion

The stage of immersion requires full presence in the experience. It includes being part of an experience without knowing a concrete goal or purpose. At the age of three I had no control over what my parents enrolled me in or what experiences they valued for me. Therefore, my beginning years of dance were truly immersion experiences. I did not understand or know the goal or purpose of the dance activities of which I was part. It was not until half way through this stage that I even recall a memory of a dance experience. As explained in my personal narrative in Chapter 4, “All I wanted to do was jump around. I was so excited to go out onto the stage.” This was a period of my life where play and imagination were especially important. I connect this with intrinsic dance, the pleasure we feel in our bodies when we are in our own flow (Fraleigh, 2000). I mentioned in my personal narrative that when I snuck backstage during a performance, “It was as if I was in another world, a fantasy land. This was my secret place just for a moment.” It is through these innocent experiences that I was introduced to dance.

Incubation

The relocation of my family and enrollment in a new school and dance studio proved to be a transition period for me in many ways, including my dance journey. I entered into the incubation period around the age of nine. I was beginning the fourth grade at this time and had six years of dance experience under my belt. At my new school of dance I began to gain insights and awareness particularly in regards to my likes and dislikes in the art of dance. “The music sounded so old, especially when they used the record player. The teachers did not smile very often.” Even at this young age I understood the absence of joy in the movement. I was able to compare and contrast previous and current experiences and begin to understand what I thought dance should be like. I even remember yearning to be challenged, which means I was aware of being bored. It was not what, but how it (dance) should be taught (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Illumination

The next two years of my life would prove to be substantial in the development of my personal definitions of dance and movement and what was good within these areas. This came with the introduction to a dance studio where I once again found joy and flow in the movement. “I loved everything about it; the way the teachers taught, the music we heard, the different ways they taught us to move our bodies, the ideas for the recital pieces. It was all just so amazing, like a breath of fresh air.” I was excited to go to dance class again. I also began to understand the basic language of dance. No matter where my family and I moved, I knew I would be dancing somewhere. That was my common ground. It kept me sane. Dance had become a major theme of my life.

Explication

New situations and experiences challenge us to evaluate and reflect upon our personal thoughts and beliefs. As my family and I moved for the last time I found myself in a defining transitional period. As I recalled in my narrative in Chapter 4, “It became harder and harder to find my “dance home.”” At the age of fourteen I was old enough to choose activities of which I wanted to be a part. At this very social point in my life I struggled to fit in already established cliques both in school and in my world of dance. It was at this point that I was forced to define my relationship with dance.

Dance had been a recurring theme in my life. It was the common thread that wove my life among different cities and schools. Although I did not fully understand the power of dance and movement, I could recall the joy and possibilities that came from it. I began this stage with the enrollment in what I will call Studio A. After two years here I was displeased with the mentality and actions of the teachers and management. Overcorrection endangers a child’s spontaneity by superimposing adult conceptions of movement (Laban, 1963, p. 21). Looking back I better understand the importance of the teachers and how the actions of that single person impacted my experiences in dance. With the support of my parents I transferred to Studio B in the same town. At Studio B I was hoping to find the joy I had once experienced in the dance studio, the feelings of being free and in the moment. I knew what I wanted out of my relationship with dance but was struggling with how to get it.

“For the last two years of my “studio dancing” career I remained disgruntled... I had had enough. I was just dancing because it was something I had been doing forever, or for as long as I could remember,” this from my narrative in Chapter 4. I finally understood what I wanted from

my relationship with dance and movement and became frustrated and hopeless as I entered into adulthood as that relationship failed to come to fruition.

Creative Synthesis

My broken relationship with dance and movement brought me feelings of sadness and nostalgia for what had once been. However, I was entering into an important phase of my life, college. It was time to “grow up.” Not long into that phase however I was given an opportunity to rekindle and make amends with “dance” through the opportunity to head up the high school Junior Orchesis. This opportunity gave me a new perspective on my relationship with dance as I started to bring together the pieces of my past dance experiences. I realized I had the chance to offer students a relationship that I had failed to have. I could offer them the joy of dance.

I gained a new understanding of the art of movement as I was forced to look at it from varying perspectives. From design, to instruction, to performance and production I was not only rekindling my relationship with dance, I was getting to know it more intimately and the power it possessed. My new relationship with movement helped me to forge new relationships with people. It was what I considered to be “one of the most powerful experiences of my life.” These experiences led me to my chosen career, teaching, and would further lead me to one of the most joyful experiences of my life, being a high school dance teacher. Laban (1963) explains that it is important to educate children to be happy in themselves and in their relationships with others through the understanding of the motive force of life, movement. I was happy to do just that.

I have brought together the pieces of dance experiences in my life in order to develop my new definition of dance. To me, dance is not a thing, an action, or a performance. Dance is a phenomenon in and of itself. When fostered in an appropriate way, dance has the power to

encourage personal relationships, develop creative capacities, and allow people to be free in their lives. Dance can make us smile, just as I am now as I sit and write this sentence.

My Teaching through the Heuristic Process

I consider myself to be in the Creative Synthesis stage at this point in my life in terms of my relationship with dance and movement. However, I find myself going through these five stages, which strongly resemble the creative process, in many aspects of my life. It is multi-layered. My years of teaching dance education fall within this process (See Figure 61.). The evaluation of my lessons plans, assignments, and assessment helped me to realize this.

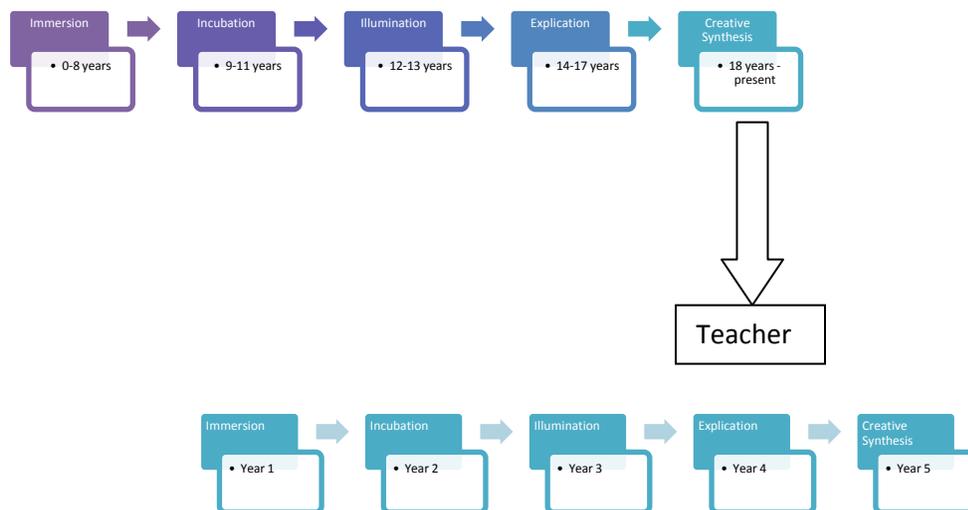


Figure 61. The multi-layered aspects of the heuristic process on my journey as a dance educator.

Immersion

As I plunged into my first year of teaching dance at the high school I struggled with the transition of teaching dance as education and dance in a studio sense. I took what I knew of the current education system and blended it with my movement experiences. This was a whole new scene compared to my work in studios and with Junior Orchestras. Assessment was a new topic I had to address at this time. As evident in Figure 45, I focused on very cut and dry aspects of ballet in one of the class's written tests. A verbal translation of dance is in no way equivalent to the importance of dance itself; it is an attempt to translate from one symbolic system to another (Sheets, 1966, p. 62). The research project (See Figure 47.) during this time also offered no sense of creativity or allowance for artistic capacities. Within this immersion experience it is

clear that I was struggling with not only developing a curriculum, but also defining its goals and purposes for my students.

Incubation

After my freshman year of teaching dance at the high school had passed I was able to unpack the year and really investigate what I had accomplished, good and bad. As evident in the explanation of the scope and sequence in Chapter 4, I found the need to increase the scope and breadth of the dance curriculum. I also came to the realization that if I was to continue and expand upon this idea of dance in education I needed to further study various areas of movement, for example yoga and ballroom dancing. It became clear to me that I was not where I needed to be in terms of a varied knowledge base of dance.

These insights helped me to grow as a dancer, but more importantly as a dance educator. As my awareness grew about the broadness of dance and its connections across many disciplines I was better prepared to offer my students a more intimate and authentic relationship with dance. With this theme of continuing education in my life, I began to appreciate the more creative and reflective aspects of dance as evident in Figure 46. I still clung to some of the more traditional aspects as in the research project, but I was slowly becoming aware of dance's capacity to be much more than movement.

Illumination

Many changes in my life led to the illumination stage of my development as a dance educator. It was in this year that I was given the opportunity to include an auditioned dance class in my schedule. At this point I was also beginning to refine my definitions of dance education and being a dance educator as I began to forge a relationship with another dance teacher in the

southern part of the state. Through the West Virginia Secondary Dance Alliance conference I began to understand how important dance is as it formed so many strong connections between my students and others. These connections were powerful and full of joy. I began to focus on more creative aspects of movement as well as reflection, critiques of others and of the self, movement for communication and meaning, and dance as an opportunity for analysis and creation. It was also during this time that I enrolled in the doctoral program at West Virginia University. I had important experiences and information to share with educators and other artists. This is one of the reasons I sit here and write as I am currently.

During this year of teaching I spent more time and energy on modern dance as evident in my lesson plans. I find this ironic as modern dance developed in rebellion to the strict and rigid forms of ballet. Modern dance began because dancers and performers felt the desire and need to not just perform very specific movements, but to communicate ideas, feelings, and themes through their active creations. I see similarities in this as I was more focused on form and specific movements and answers in my first few years of teaching but then felt the need for something more meaningful and organic, much like the performers of the time hungered for more in their dancing.

Explication

The invitation by the West Virginia Department of Education to be part of the arts team responsible for the creation of instructional guides, various training, and other consultant work allowed me to share with others in the field my experiences and examples of dance education. These opportunities forced me to evaluate and reflect on my personal beliefs as a dance educator. It was during this time that the core of my dance curriculum gelled. At this core are notions of

creativity, imagination, the forming of connections, analysis, and reflection all in a cooperative setting. I came to understand the importance of language and that dance is indeed a language in and of itself. We need multiple literacies in schools (Eisner, 1998, p. 8). This form of literacy, this language, brought me to another dance educator in New York and presently allows our students to communicate despite their differences in age and communities. Dance has proven to be a phenomenon in my life that has allowed me to better understand myself and what brings me joy. In turn, it allows me to present opportunities for these same experiences for my students.

Creative Synthesis

With a new understanding of dance and its role in the high school experience I continued to experiment with different activities and perspectives. The information and self-realization gained from my observations with the dance professor at West Virginia University opened up my eyes to ways I teach and some of the things I take for granted with my students. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 4, what each dancer brings to the class, including where they have come from in both the distant and most recent past. I focused even more on including imagery in my instruction, especially since I teach students who have limited to no experience in dance or creative movement. I also found myself challenging my students to consider what is dance, and when does movement become dance, including questions like; what is the essence of the movement, of the music, of the choreography? With all of this going on, I maintained my energies in connecting dance with other disciplines and other themes within our global community through experiences and opportunities in and out of the high school.

Students' Experiences and Outcomes

Students rise to the expectations we set for them. In the beginning of my dance teaching experiences, my curriculum was less reflective and creative and more focused on cut and dry concepts such as definitions and more structured forms of movement such as ballet. Therefore, my students met those expectations and succeeded in terms of the curriculum I was delivering at that point in time. The movement was still a valuable experience for them as they connected the brain and body, but it was not until my third, fourth, and fifth years that I consider my most influential dance education to have occurred.

During these pivotal years my current beliefs about dance education formed and concurrently I solidified a curriculum based on notions of creative movement, reflection, and analysis. I began to encourage students to see dance in their daily lives, as part of things they already are familiar with and use. Figure 49 is an example of this as I connected the ever-popular YouTube craze to dance. Furthermore, I encouraged deep reflection and abstract thinking as I implemented assignments that guided students to create their embodied art based on their interpretations and analysis of various visual art and literature pieces (See Figures 50-57.) as they worked in a cooperative setting. Further evidence for my push for a deeper look at movement is evident in the evolution of concert programs (See Figures 36-38.).

The developed dance curriculum is in line with the West Virginia Department of Education's call for 21st century skills. It encourages cooperative work, creative analysis, open-ended prompts, and the formation of various connections. I have found it to be essential to the physical, mental, and emotional development of high school students for this, among other reasons. Another aspect of the dance curriculum is the challenge of the students to evaluate and assess themselves and their peers, as evident in Figures 58 and 59. This is an essential skill for their futures in the work arena.

An emotional part of this dissertation was the collection of past notes and cards from students and parents. I spent a few hours sitting on the floor of my study sifting through the boxes, rereading each piece and remembering each student and parent. It was hard to narrow down what to include as evidence. In my eyes each piece is significant. And, although some may deem this study insignificant as it is one that investigates the researcher herself, never before have I been so excited and surprised about how my personal experiences and those of my students are connected and related in a multi-layered sense. From the first card I received from the Junior Orchestral group (See Figure 39.) that set in motion my career path to the note from the parent in Figure 41, I sense that I have positively influenced students through dance and could not have successfully done so without going through the five stages described.

Through these pieces of evidence I have come under the impression that these experiences in dance have allowed many an emotional and physical outlet (See Figure 42.) and provided a situation that promoted creativity in an environment at the high school level where it is “okay” to use your imagination (See Figure 43.). Through the examples of student work I have seen students develop meaning on their own, versus the “sit and get,” as they dissected pieces from other subject areas and formed connections between these pieces and movement experiences. So I ask the question, is dance worth it?

Why Dance is Worth It

I return to the two questions previously identified in this dissertation; how has dance and movement influenced my journey and how has this influence affected the high school experience of my students? The stages of my life up to this point have proven to be closely aligned to those of the heuristic and creative processes, as mentioned and supported formerly. Through this study I have discovered unexpected, multi-layered themes in my life as a dancer and as a teacher.

Through the inward reflection of the outward movement of my life I can now exhale deeply and answer these research questions thoroughly.

The Overall Influence on Me

Dance has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Never has there been a spring without a dance recital, a fall without class orientation, nor a month gone by during the school term where I have not experienced dance. Throughout my childhood, dance was my common ground as my family and I moved. It provided consistency among inconsistent friends and schools. It often brought me joy, but at times forced me to consider what good dance experiences consisted of as the flow of my life delivered me to various teachers and styles. Dance was my friend, but we had rocky times, just like any relationship. As I entered college and began my work with the Junior Orchestris dance group, I was charged with more clearly defining dance from a new perspective, through that of a director's lens. Through this investigation I began to understand that dance is not just an individual phenomenon, but one that connects people. This was the beginning of my awareness about the importance of dance in all humans' lives. Through the development of the dance curriculum I was challenged each year, each phase of my teaching, to adjust my lessons, assignments, and assessment as my perspective on dance transformed. Personal experimentation and encounters and interactions with various people in the business of arts and education have led me to this point in time. It is now that I see the bigger picture of what dance is and how it has influenced my journey.

For the first fifteen years of my interactions with dance I was involved in dance training. I define dance training to be modeling movement after an example. This movement was set to music and performed for the sake of the movement, not for meaning or anything else. This

introduction was an imperative step. It was the transition between high school and my current teaching career that I began to see a difference between dance training and dance education. During this moment I was in college and working with the Junior Orchestras dancers as previously mentioned. As I entered into the high school setting as a dance teacher as part of the fine arts curriculum I more solidly defined dance as education versus dance as training. I currently consider what I do to be dance education and have defined this as follows; dance education is a phenomenon that involves movement principles based on all genres of dance and includes but is not limited to historical and cultural components, creative, analytical, and reflective processes, the formation of meaning and meaningful connections across disciplines, and the promotion of imaginative and creative problem solving.

It took me twenty-five years to come up with that definition. This explanation encompasses dance's influence on me throughout that time. Without the dance recitals when I was five, without the boredom I experienced during grades four through six of my youth, without the challenge of the Junior Orchestras, without the meeting of my West Virginia and Brooklyn dance comrades, without every experience of my life I would not have been able to write this dissertation and come to a realization of what good dance education is and why it is a necessity. Now, how has this influenced my high school students?

The Overall Influence on my High School Students

The faces tell it all. Not just the smiles, but the furrowed brows of frustration and focus, the intense emotion during performance, the gazes of thought and illumination. It is the question, "what are we doing in dance today?" It is the book bag ready with dance clothes and the loaded iPod waiting for a movement prompt. It is the freedom to jump in any direction and

the joy that that movement brings. It is a phenomenon that each and every high school student deserves to experience. Dance is worth it.

Dance is worth it because it is basic to the human experience. As humans we are at our most natural state in motion and learning how to connect this movement to meaning is a valuable practice. Through dance education, as I defined previously, high school students know more intimately global components of our community as dance is a common thread throughout all countries and cultures. My students have formed connections with students they never would have imagined through dance class, like the students in Brooklyn and many of the students I have had with special needs. My students have learned how dance encodes emotion and other themes as well as how to dissect and analyze pieces of movement for these meanings as they work side by side to problem solve.

My journey through dance has influenced my high school students in countless ways. I am sure there are ways that I am not even aware of yet. But for now, I am able to use the medium of dance education to promote concepts such as diversity, empathy, self-expression, communication, and respect. These are themes not addressed by dance training, but dance education. Schools do not encourage joy, but dance education does, and joy is a necessity for successful living.

It is hard to describe in words a phenomenon that is nonverbal. It is the experience of dance education that is vital to high school students. It is evident in their faces, but you cannot see those faces as privacy laws ensue. Dance education is experiential, it is joyful, and it is meaningful. Can schools get by without it? Of course, they have for years and continue to today. However, as mentioned formerly, what we are currently doing in the field of education is just not working. We need experiences like those offered through dance education in order to

meet the needs of the 21st century, the Conceptual Age, of which we all are now a part. How can we engender meaning throughout the high school curriculum? Dance. Dance *is* worth it.

Suggestions for Future Study

Just like the field of education, the field of research is never static. It is always moving and transforming. This dissertation is merely the beginning in capturing the essence of quality dance education and the student outcomes for such. Below I have listed suggestions for future investigations to enhance and advance the body of knowledge on dance education and engendering meaning through dance and movement experiences within the education setting.

1. The integration of movement and dance experiences across the curriculum. This dissertation has focused on dance education as a self-standing class in the high school curriculum. A future study on the integration of various dance concepts throughout other subject areas would be interesting. This future study could focus on the influence of dance education and instruction on students' achievement, understanding, and developed meaning of the other discipline. Currently there is a push state-wide for differentiated instruction. Using movement to form meaning is an example of differentiated instruction and a way to include the highly acclaimed arts into other areas of study.
2. The relationship between and influence of choreography development and creative writing. Through my dance education classes I introduce choreography through the development of movement phrases or sentences which can combine to be a completed dance work. There are many similarities between this concept and those in creative writing. A colleague of mine, an English teacher, and I have discussed doing a joint unit combining these two themes. I think this would prove to be an interesting follow-up study.

3. Dance education as an avenue to address diversity in education. As mentioned previously, dance is a language that spans countries and cultures. I would like to see an investigation involving pre and post beliefs and opinions about different cultures and races after the delivery of a dance education unit on such. As the world we live in continues to get smaller and smaller via technology and mobility, diversity and empathy have proven to be hot topics in education. Using movement and dance experiences to join people together and to heighten awareness of the notion that we as humans are one through dance could prove to be powerful.
4. Dance education experience at the elementary level. The valuable outcomes of dance education should not be limited to the high school experience. I would like to see a study done on the influences of dance education and movement experiences on students in the early education and elementary levels. Children seem to be educated out of their creativity at earlier and earlier ages. Dance education may promote sustained creativity and the formation of strong connections across disciplines.
5. Within the field of dance education, the influences of technology and media. One would be hard pressed to find an aspect of life unaffected by the Information Age, including that of dance education. A study on the presence of technology in the dance community and its uses in education settings may be interesting. Contrasting these findings with ideas of dance education pre-Information Age may be interesting and provide insight to the evolution of dance education.

In closing, dance and movement experiences have played a monumental role in my life and my work. I cannot imagine my life without the art of dance. It has opened my eyes to notions of joy, creativity, and the interconnectedness of humans. It has helped me to form authentic

meaning and powerful relationships. The exceptional experience of unpacking this as a teacher has helped me to examine my life and work. This reflective practice has great implications for other teachers as we understand living an examined life, versus an unexamined one, is essential to authentic and engaging instruction. It is my opinion that all students should be offered the opportunity to experience the profound outcomes of a quality dance education program and schools should work to ensure that these experiences are available to students because dance has the power to engender meaning within the high school experience. In the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, “Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education; dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen?”

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Appendix

Appendix A: Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory consists of the following learning styles:

1. Linguistic: strengths in spoken and written language and language learning
2. Logical-Mathematical: strengths in mathematical operations, scientific inquiry, and logical and analytical problem solving
3. Musical: strengths in musical patterns, including composition and performance
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic: strengths in problem solving using the human body as an instrument and body awareness
5. Spatial: strengths in utilizing wide and confined spaces and patterns to solve problems
6. Interpersonal: strengths in working in groups and understanding other people
7. Intrapersonal: strengths in understanding and knowing oneself and working individually

Appendix B: Four Opportunities for Brain Development

The four opportunities for brain development according to Anne Green Gilbert (2006) are:

1. Conception to Birth: Cell Explosion

During this phase of development, trillions of brain cells form and find their places in the brain. The mother's choice of food and drugs, health concerns including lack of exercise, and severe stress may cause cell malformation in the fetus.

2. Birth to Age Three: Synaptic Connections

Brain mapping develops through developmental movement patterns and sensory input. This is a critical period as trillion of brain cells become available to "look for work." Severe sensory deprivation may cause irreversible synaptic pruning (the elimination of synapses).

3. Ages Four to Twelve: Dendrite Expansion

Billions of brain cells are stimulated during this developmental period. Dendrites branch out and create neural connections. It is during this phase that the brain learns fastest and most efficiently by learning to make sense of everything around it. An enriched environment filled with movement opportunities, arts experiences, appropriate challenges, focusing on process versus product, and good nutrition will continue appropriate growth.

4. Ages 12 to Adult: Brain Plasticity

Continued stimulation is important in this phase of development as the brain has plasticity and is not static. Staying active both mentally and physically will help the brain to remap. One study shows that dancing three to four times a week significantly slows dementia as repeating developmental movement patterns that wired the central nervous system in the first year of life fully integrates the brain and body.

Appendix C: Key Elements of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills

Four key elements of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills are:

1. Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes

English (reading or language arts), world languages, the arts, mathematics, Economics, science, geography, history, government, and civics are labeled as the core subject areas. In addition to these subjects, schools must move beyond a focus on basic competency in core subjects to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes such as global awareness, financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, healthy literacy, and environmental literacy into core subjects.

2. Learning and Innovation Skills

Learning and innovation skills increasingly are being recognized as the skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.

3. Information, Media, and Technology Skills

People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-infused environment, marked by various characteristics, including: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media, and technology.

4. Life and Career Skills

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate through complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills. These skills include flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility.