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## HOW DOES BACKGROUND AND TRAINING AFFECT DANCE PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### HOW DOES BACKGROUND AND TRAINING AFFECT DANCE PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Dance faculty in higher education have various backgrounds and training ranging from professional dance careers to doctoral degrees in dance. This study sought to examine the ways background and training impact faculty members' pedagogical approach to a dance technique class in a higher education dance department. This study examined the pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge of participants through qualitative methods including interviews, observations, and document analysis. Six major themes emerged from the data: desire to teach, teaching focus, challenging students, planning and preparation, instructional methods, and assessment strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** Dance Education, Dance Pedagogy, Dance Faculty, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Dance Training

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July 12, 2010

HOW DOES BACKGROUND AND TRAINING AFFECT DANCE PEDAGOGY IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION?

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THESIS

Meredith Erin Sims

The Graduate School  
University of Kentucky

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HOW DOES BACKGROUND AND TRAINING AFFECT DANCE PEDAGOGY IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION?

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the  
College of Education  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Meredith Erin Sims

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Heather Erwin, Professor of Kinesiology and Health Promotion

Lexington, Kentucky

2010

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For my family—Allison, Kathryn, Brad, Janet, and Terry

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following thesis could not have been possible without the guidance, insight and support of several people.

First and foremost this project would never have been completed without the constant support of my advisor Dr. Heather Erwin. Her generosity and endless assistance was remarkable. She always took the time to answer my questions. She never turned me away when I appeared at her office door exasperated and took time from her personal life to provide timely feedback. I could never ask for a more knowledgeable and kinder mentor.

Additionally Dr. Rayma Beal was an irreplaceable part of this study. Her vast knowledge of dance education was invaluable. Her attention to detail made this project better and more comprehensive. I am grateful for her willingness to see this project to the end despite her retirement. Her passion and commitment to dance education is something I admire and hope to emulate. I am grateful for our friendship.

This study also benefitted from the input of Dr. Aaron Beighle. His enthusiasm and perceptive feedback helped me to think deeper about the purpose and impact of my research. I am thankful for his agreement to serve on this committee.

I would also like to thank the faculty and staff of the Kinesiology and Health Promotion Department for supporting this research, particularly Dr. Melody Noland and Dr. Richard Riggs.

I am grateful to the participants of the study (who remain anonymous for confidentiality purposes) for their time and energy. Their willingness to participate and share their teaching practices so honestly made this project possible.



I am also thankful for three dance teachers who have inspired me to be a better dance teacher: Debra Rice Endris, Kiesha Lalama-White, and Dr. Rayma Beal. Their example is what led me to this topic.

My friends and fellow KHP students: Elizabeth Easley, Seth Eckler, Emma Scott, Samantha Thomas, and Brooke Worley were incredibly supportive of my research. I am grateful for the perspective and laughter they provided.

Allison Sims, assistant to the author, was an immense help on this project. She listened to me read this paper aloud numerous times. She provided initial impressions and helped me reason out some of the trouble spots. I am also thankful for the times she provided comic relief.

Kathryn Loheide served this project by listening to me complain and remaining interested in my work. I am thankful for her perspective, encouragement, and friendship. I am also grateful to her husband and my brother-in-law, Brad Loheide, for his kindness and interest. I am grateful for the times during this process when the two of them provided wanted distractions.

Most importantly I would like to thank my parents Janet and Terry Sims. I am grateful for the encouragement and support they have provided throughout my academic and dance career. They have traveled to and suffered through nearly every dance performance I have been a part of. They have never denied my aspirations. I will never be able to repay all of the gifts they have given me, but hope that my impact on others will be a reflection of them. The love they give me makes me want to do more.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Dance has existed since the beginning of man. Many agree that dance is the first art form (Royce, 1977). Even before verbal communication or organized nonverbal communication, persons used movement in time and space to express themselves (Royce, 1977). As H'Doubler (1940) states, "Every age has had its dance, and the fact that dance has lived is evidence of its value" (p. 3).

Dance is a valuable tool for activity and expression and can be used in social, recreational, and formal settings. The various purposes of dance make it accessible to all. Dance can serve in many capacities and offer numerous benefits. One facet of dance is its ability to provide movement education. This type of education teaches one to learn how to move their body efficiently and safely and find enjoyment in such movement. Proponents of movement education often state that the point is to teach students to enjoy movement for the kinesthetic sensation (Kraus, Hilsendager, & Dixon, 1991). Hayes (1964) expands on the concept of movement education in dance stating:

The key to its distinction lies in that the dancer's immediate concern is not with lifting weights, transporting himself through water, balancing on skates or skis, or winning a game, but rather with movement per se—movement that has consciously been given form and rhythmic structure to provide physical, emotional or aesthetic satisfaction. If dance happens also to promote good physical condition or otherwise contribute to the welfare of the dancer, so much the better; but the derivation of such benefits is not the essential reason for the existence of dance. (p. 3)

Advocates for dance education as movement education point out that, "the many elements of dance—kinesthetic sense, strength, agility, rhythmic ability, flexibility, and audience manipulation—are used in one way or another in any physical activity" (Silverman, 1986, p. 32).

While dance can and should be valued and enjoyed for its movement principles, it also offers many health benefits. Dance promotes cardiovascular fitness, boosts endurance, strengthens muscles, increases flexibility, improves coordination, and more (Kraus et al., 1991). The current trend in dance as a fitness activity, spurred by the success of dance based television shows and the national concern for obesity, has popularized classes such as dance aerobics, Zumba, Jazzercise, ballroom dance classes, and other dance technique classes like ballet, tap, and jazz for exercise (Kraus et al., 1991).

Dance, particularly creative and modern dance, also aids in the development of personal creativity. Students utilize innovative and inspired problem thinking skills to solve compositional and movement problems. Students are forced to look at problems in a fresh way that opens them to new ways of thinking. This type of thinking develops creativity and enriches activities that may otherwise be repetitive or boring (Kraus et al., 1991).

In addition to the development of personal creativity, dance also offers an opportunity for a unique aesthetic experience. Dance involves an experience that encompasses the body, intellect, and emotions. While other art forms often produce a product of expression that stands separate from the creator, dance produces a product of expression that *is* the creator in motion (Kraus et al., 1991). For another to experience the art the dancer must also experience the art at the same moment—a true shared experience. The dancer is creating the moment while the audience is receiving it. The two entities share and reciprocate energy about the movement.

Dance also generally involves collaboration between the arts. Dance performances often involve music as accompaniment, visual art as setting or prop, and literary expression as storyline. Other art forms can also serve as inspiration for dance performance. There have been several famous and successful collaborations of artists. In the 1910s Pablo Picasso famously created costumes, stage sets, and curtains for Sergei Diaghilev's Les Ballet Russes. In the 1950s modern choreographer Merce Cunningham, composer John Cage, and painter Robert Rauschenberg collaborated to produce numerous ground breaking dance works (Kraus et al., 1991).

Dance is also an effective means for understanding history, customs, beliefs, and other cultures. Dance students experience folk and ethnic dances and learn how these dances originated and their role in society. We know about other cultures, time periods, and eras by the artistic products created. Art reflects the state of society; therefore, dance can serve as a reflection of the feelings and thoughts of a period, decade, and era. As dancers learn established repertoire they can learn the historical significance of the work and/or choreographer (Kraus et al., 1991).

The social involvement aspects of dance are also beneficial to students. Dance students often work collaboratively in groups to compose movement phrases. Group planning and decision-making are required for creating and performing works of dance. Dancers must participate by giving and receiving constructive criticism. Dance students must also consider their own beliefs and values and how those impact their artistic expression (Krause et al., 1991).

The numerous developmental benefits of dance, for instance, body control, physical health, cooperation, expression, criticism, cultural awareness, and increased self-

esteem make it a useful subject for preschool through college curriculum (Gilbert, 1992). Unfortunately dance does not always receive attention as a necessary area of study. According to Carter (2001), despite the current economic concerns, arts education has actually seen a revival in recent years including the expansion in dance education in popular culture, education, and stage productions.

Originally dance occupied a central place in education. Ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle believed that dance contributes to aesthetic, moral, and intellectual values as well as to enhancing physical adeptness and overall well-being. Plato contended that dance trains the mind and soul to differentiate among forms of actions, feelings, and ideas. Aristotle ranked dance among the educational activities that cultivate the mind (Carter, 2001).

In America, dance has been a part of education since Colonial times when dance masters provided wealthy families with training in graceful movements and social skills. Dance then transitioned into the general education curriculum with a foundation in military-type gymnastics. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century dance education again transitioned to a more aesthetic approach. Influenced by progressive educators such as John Dewey and modern dancers Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and Ruth St. Denis, modern 20<sup>th</sup> century dance education was reformed to focus on artistic creation through movement. Dewey's theories of aesthetics and progressive education, which emphasized personal development, reinforced the desire of the pioneers of modern dance education to develop an approach to dance education based on aesthetic and humanistic principles (Carter, 2001). In the mid-1910s, Margaret H'Doubler began experimenting with creative dance as curriculum in higher education. H'Doubler believed strongly in the relationship

between physical technique and emotional expression as the basis for dance education (Brennan, 1998).

Dance has much to offer an individual's development and should be fostered in the educational system. As the National Dance Association pointed out in a policy statement in 1977, dance deserves a place in curriculum for several reasons. Dance offers basic education, enhancing and illuminating the human experience. Dance also reinforces other academic areas and modes of learning. In addition, dance provides alternative approaches to learning and may be advantageous in connecting with various types of learners. Dance encourages social and self-awareness fostering peer relations and self-understanding. Good health and body awareness can be gained engaging in dance activities. Dance also cultivates understanding of one's own culture and that of others (Fowler & Little, 1977).

For these reasons, many campaigned for dance to become a necessary part of education curriculum (H'Doubler, 1940). Others argued that dance as a subject does not contribute directly to vocational aspirations the ways mathematics and language arts contribute (Carter, 2001). H'Doubler (1940) stated:

It is to be expected that not everyone will be a great dancer, and that dancing, of course, will be experienced as a complete art form more by some than by others; but, as every child has a right to a box of crayons and some instruction in the fundamental principles of drawing and in the use of color, whether or not there is any chance of his becoming a professional artist, so every child has a right to know how to achieve control of his body in order that he may use it to the limit of his ability for the expression of his own reactions to life. Even if he can never carry his efforts far enough to realize dance in its highest forms, he may experience the sheer joy of the rhythmic sense of free, controlled, and expressive movement, and through this know an addition to life to which every human being is entitled. If the interest in giving instruction in dance is to produce dancers only, dance as a creative and pleasurable art experience, possible to all, is doomed. (p. 66)

Dance can be beneficial to individuals of all abilities and talents. Through dance education individuals can have a basic understanding of dance principles such as body awareness, muscle control, basic rhythm principles, expression through movement, and creative reasoning. For those with the desire to pursue dance into higher education and as a career, quality instruction must be experienced in order to become competent in the discipline.

When dance faculty are educating students who have chosen to pursue dance in higher education as preparation for a career as a performer, it is important to provide essential skills and valuable knowledge. Highly skilled and competent quality instructors are necessary to develop successful students. Dance instructors can have a variety of backgrounds ranging from professional dancer to physical educators with a dance emphasis. These varied dance backgrounds and training have the potential to shape a teacher's pedagogical approach. Some teachers may be unaware of their own pedagogical approach to teaching dance class because they lack an understanding of teaching principles. Dance faculty with little or no background in educational concepts may simply "give a class" without a lesson plan (formal or informal) and no assessment of the student (formal or informal). Conversely, dance faculty with educational backgrounds might be constricted by specified curriculum and assessment rubrics to allow for the changing environment of a dance class and thus fail to respond to the varying needs of the students. The purpose of this study is to examine how backgrounds and training affect faculty members' pedagogical approach to a dance technique class in a higher education dance department.



## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Historical Overview of Dance in Higher Education

Dance was initially located in higher education as a subject in women's physical education courses (Oliver, 1992). These courses were designed to prepare women as physical education teachers. The purpose for including dance in the curriculum was to develop grace, manners, and physical fitness (O'Brien, 1966). As the programs developed, other qualities became significant. The Harvard Summer School, established by Dudley Sargent in 1887, offered dance as a part of its physical education program and stressed the importance of Francois Delsarte's concept of expressiveness through movement.

In 1905 dance was the theme of the American Physical Education Association conference and seven dance articles were printed in physical education publications (Oliver, 1992). In higher education dance expanded from individual aesthetic dancing to include social and folk dances. At this time the works of Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Martha Graham were influencing dance to value expressiveness above physical fitness. Dance grew as a subject in physical education in higher education institutions placing the emphasis on all things natural, expressive, and educational.

Dance education advanced at Teachers College, Columbia University where in 1913 Gertrude Colby was teaching "natural dance" (Chapman, 1974). Her approach was grounded in the ideas of Duncan's free-spirited and expressive movement and Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's concepts of eurhythmics which involved bodily exercises used to accentuate rhythmic awareness (Oliver, 1992; Kraus et al., 1991). Colby experimented with natural movement in creative dance based on student interest. Also at this time Bird

Larson, who realized the importance of Colby's natural movement but felt dance also needed a scientific element, experimented with developing a dance technique rooted in the laws of anatomy, kinesiology, and physics at Barnard College on Columbia University's campus (Kraus et al., 1991). Larson began working on a dance technique where movement was initiated in the torso. The combination of Colby's improvisation and expression and Larson's scientific movement began a partnership of the two aspects of modern educational dance. These two qualities, artistic expression and physical technique, are still important knowledge bases for dance education.

In 1916 Margaret H'Doubler, a physical education teacher at the University of Wisconsin, attended Teachers College to earn her master's degree. She studied the work of both Colby and Larson. H'Doubler also observed classes with Alys Bentley, a children's music teacher. Bentley encouraged students to lie on the floor and respond to the music through movement. H'Doubler recognized that students were free of gravity and this allowed for more genuine movement. H'Doubler began to experiment with these ideas and upon her return to the University of Wisconsin offered her first dance class in the summer of 1917 (Brennan, 1998). H'Doubler's classes were a marriage of expression and technique. She focused on "self generated creativity" and "structural changes of the body" (Wilson, Hagood, & Brennan, 2006). H'Doubler described her technique as "training the mind to use the body as an expressive instrument" (H'Doubler, 1940, p. xi).

In 1926 Margaret H'Doubler established the first dance major in higher education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The major was within the women's physical education department. The focus of the major was on educating future dance teachers in the development of dance as a science as well as an art. H'Doubler also founded

Orchesis, a dance club for students. This club provided an opportunity for students to participate in dance performances for other schools and audiences. These two programs served as models for most other college and university dance programs. Many dance educators were trained through H'Doubler's program and went on to establish dance programs at other higher education institutions (Brennan, 1998).

The American Physical Education Association created the National Section on Dance in 1932 to aid in solidifying the role of dance education. The relationship between dance professionals and dance education programs began to strengthen. Many of the leading dancers of the time were on faculty at university dance programs including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, Erick Hawkins, and José Limón (Oliver, 1992). H'Doubler's pedagogical approach of providing a framework of physical movement while allowing individual expression was still being used.

The location of dance within the university began to be a major discussion in the 1950s and 1960s. Some programs sought to become their own department, but the financial and personnel burdens made this unrealistic. Most programs were conflicted about shifting into fine arts departments or remaining in physical education departments (Oliver, 1992). Dance as an academic discipline was seeking autonomy during this time. Dance deserved a place in higher education valued for its physical, cognitive, social, creative, and expressive benefits (Oliver, 1992).

Dance educators understood that to be taken seriously by university and college administrators they must conduct research in dance. The Dance Division (formerly the National Section on Dance renamed in 1965 by American Association for Health Physical Education and Recreation) identified three major issues of the time: "training

quality teachers, getting men into the field, and establishing dance as a discipline on all campuses” (Griffith, 1975).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s questions regarding dance in higher education curriculum content and qualifications for dance faculty arose. Additionally, the conflict of academic degree requirements for dance faculty became problematic. Many professional dancers were teaching at higher education institutions without a terminal degree and often without any degree. Some academic programs were tailored to developing dance educators rather than performers. Students wishing to become professional dancers, particularly ballet dancers, were studying primarily at private studios and not attending colleges or universities (Oliver, 1992). In the 1980s more university dance departments began offering programs focused on dance performance.

Currently dance program emphases vary from institution to institution (Carter, 2001). Dance programs are located in departments ranging from physical education (i.e. Indiana University) to fine arts (i.e. Butler University) to women’s studies (i.e. Knox College) to conservatories, a higher education institution where performance is the main goal (i.e. Point Park University) (Oliver, 1992). There are a variety of foci in several dance programs, including education (i.e. Montclair State University), performance (i.e. Florida State University), choreography (i.e. University of Nevada), and research (i.e. Ohio State University) (Carter, 2001).

Even with the advances of dance education in higher education many of the same issues that were present in the early 1900s still exist. According to Crawford (1994) women still outnumber men in dance programs. Dance research of the written quantitative and qualitative nature, while expanding, is still minimal relative to most

other areas of academe (Carter, 2001). Dance majors are not found on all campuses while dance faculty vary in their dance expertise and academic credentials (Kraus et al., 1991).

Depending on the type of institution, school, and/or program the requirements for dance faculty members vary. Most universities expect a Doctoral degree, Master degree, or “equivalent professional experience” for their faculty (Shaffer, 2003). According to the National Association of Schools of Dance (2003) there are three universities that offer the Doctor of Philosophy in Dance. Other institutions offer a Doctor of Education degree with Dance as a focus. There are approximately 30 institutions that offer the Master of Fine Arts in Dance, considered the terminal practice-oriented degree in dance. Approximately 25 institutions offer a Master of Arts in Dance degree. Additionally there are programs that offer the Master of Science or Master of Education with a dance concentration. The opportunities for obtaining higher education degrees in dance is a concern for the development of qualified dance educators as well as creating valid quantitative and qualitative dance research (Kraus et al., 1991).

#### Professional Dance Experience versus Dance Education

The idea of dance faculty members possessing terminal degrees is relatively new beginning in the late 1980s (Oliver, 1992). As mentioned before, when dance majors were first established, leading professional dancers, not trained as dance educators, were hired as faculty. This tradition has carried through to today. This raises the question of whether professional dance performance or choreography experience is equivalent to a Master or Doctorate degree. How can one measure the type of knowledge garnered during time spent with a professional company versus time spent earning an advanced degree?

It is difficult to determine if these two types of experiences result in the same types of knowledge. An individual with adequate professional experience might be a highly skilled technical dancer with great understanding of repertoire and possess exceptional abilities in performance qualities and artistic expression. This individual could be knowledgeable in a variety of other areas ranging from costumes to arts administration depending upon the type of company with whom the dancer performed. Similarly the knowledge base for an individual with a terminal degree (i.e., Master's or Doctoral degree in Dance) may vary depending upon the type of institution attended, the degree earned, and area of focus. An individual with a terminal degree in dance may choose to pursue a degree with a focus on performance, choreography, theory, education, history, or other areas. Students interested in pursuing a career as a dance educator would presumably take courses in dance pedagogy.

There is an expectation that dance educators with advanced degrees should still have professional experience. Higher education administrators believe that dance educators should have an understanding of the professional dance world. This concept seems logical if the goal of the program is to develop professional dancers and/or choreographers. If this is the goal, the faculty preparing the students for a professional dance career should have the requisite knowledge and skill to pass on.

This emphasis on professional experience leads one to question its importance. Years of professional training and performance experience may not prepare one to be a teacher. These individuals may be highly skilled dancers with great knowledge in technique and repertoire, but little to no knowledge in pedagogical techniques. Often this kind of background leads to teachers who “teach as they were taught.” Historically

dancers needed to know the practical side of dance, meaning dancers simply needed to know how to execute and perform steps. For this reason often the best dancers often became dance teachers. Gray (1989) writes, “These people have handed down pedagogical strategies and acted as dance teachers ever since leading and following became forms of teaching and learning. Dance teachers traditionally have taught as they themselves were taught” (p. 3). Other scholars have also reported that most dance teachers based their approach to teaching on the traditional way they learned to dance (Clarkson, 1988; Lord, 1984). Myers (1989) suggests that if most dance teachers were questioned about their instructional approach to teaching, their response would be, “the tradition, the way things are” (p. 1).

According to Lakes (2005) the tradition of professional dancers or choreographers teaching is dangerous because these teachers lack pedagogical knowledge and often rule their dance studio as tyrants with little concern for student learning. Their emphasis is on producing dancers that can mimic their movement by whatever means necessary. Lakes (2005) states, “By its routine enabling of pedagogically unsound teaching behaviors, the dance field may still unwittingly foster models for dance technique and rehearsal instruction that are rooted in outmoded educational philosophies of previous eras” (p. 16).

Lakes (2005) further supports this claim with a quote from Myron Nadel commenting on:

the malevolent impact of a demagoguery that exists in the name of “tradition” in dance teaching. If it were not still a problem in dance education, it would merely be a revealing footnote to history....I am privy to student complaints of such behaviors in the humanities as well as in art, music, theatre, and of course, dance. It seems that many of us in higher education have learned authoritarian techniques from our teachers and carry concomitant attitudes toward students into the contemporary classroom. (p. 17)

Perhaps teachers should spend more time reflecting on their own educational theories and how those impact students.

Many dance teachers are retired dance professionals or working dance professionals especially in larger cities such as New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco (Lakes, 2005). Most dancers teach at some point in their career to supplement income. This is an issue as these dancers may not care about best teaching practices and rather just teach to support themselves or their professional career. As Agnes De Mille (1973) pointed out, “When one knows the correct order, one can teach Cecchetti and earn money. Teaching dancing is something else. They don’t trouble about this in class...Where are [future dance teachers] to pick this up?” (p. 50). Dance teachers should take their role seriously. Often a prominent dancer or choreographer is hired to teach at a university or college because it is assumed that if one is a skilled dancer or choreographer one will be a skilled teacher. Clearly this logic is faulty (Lakes, 2005). However, if a professional dancer is willing to accept a teaching position and its monetary compensation, he/she should work on becoming an effective teacher.

Despite the evidence that professional dancers without pedagogy training may not be as effective teachers as those with pedagogy training, there still exists a stigma that these teachers are more prestigious (Fortin & Siedentop, 1995; Fortin, 1993). In the dance community a dance educator’s relationship to professional companies, performances, or choreography elevates his or her status. Experience or training in education is perceived as less valuable. Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, and Van Dyke (1990) identified this as a type of hierarchy. The “best” teachers at the top are the individuals who have been professional performers or choreographers. The levels trickle down to the educators who



could not make it as a professional dancer or choreographer and are forced to teach. This stigma, while more prominent in the private sector, is also apparent in many university dance programs specifically those dance programs focused on performance (Stinson, et al., 1990). Even George Balanchine, famous choreographer for the New York City Ballet, purported this notion of inadequate dancers becoming teachers stating, “I never ‘became a teacher’: no, I am a person who teaches. Bad dancers ‘become teachers.’” (p. 24).

These teachers who do not self identify as teachers pose a problem to the dance community. If these teachers do not see their work as teaching they become oblivious to the pedagogical theories impacting their class. These instructors may believe that their experiences as a professional dancer or choreographer are adequate preparation to educate students in colleges or universities. It seems obvious that a teacher should have experience in the subject matter being taught, so dance teachers teaching in a performance based program should have experience as performers. The question becomes do these teachers also need experience in pedagogical techniques? Perhaps the traditional approach of instructing movement and students imitating these movements is sufficient. However, research shows this often leads to conservative, replicated teaching (Cuban, 1984). The lack of pedagogical knowledge results in limited teaching resources for the instructor. Teachers with these types of performance backgrounds may not be interested in educating themselves in educational theory (Lakes, 2005). They may believe that their training in the professional realm subjugates or even trumps training in education. However, there is no research that demonstrates that professional performers or choreographers exhibit more effective teaching practices than those with education training.

On the plus side for those in dance education, this antiquated way of thinking is slowly changing. Greater academic value is being recognized for dance historians, scholars, critics, and teachers. As Fortin and Siedentop (1995) state:

The point here is not to diminish the importance of the professional background of dance teachers. Teaching is bound to content and in dance the physical involvement, the experiential knowledge, is a primary aspect of content. The point is rather to highlight the importance of expanding the conception of relevant knowledge in dance teaching. (p. 6)

Educators should use their backgrounds to enhance their teaching abilities as well as to influence their pedagogical style. Once a dancer transitions into an educational role one should educate oneself on educational theory to better serve students. Dance professionals need more knowledge than simply how to imitate movement, but rather an understanding of the historical context, the kinesthetic principles, and the emotional quality of the movement. It is the dance educator's responsibility to inspire and cultivate this type of higher order thinking about dance.

The background of faculty can affect students who choose to pursue a dance performance degree at a higher education institution rather than continue training at professional private studios. These students are seemingly anticipating a well-rounded education in all aspects of dance. Dance educators should be giving students the tools to be autonomous dancers. These dance students should be able to create, perform, and respond as well as solve movement problems on their own. Dance students seeking a career in dance must be able to self assess and self correct their technical abilities. Dancers must understand on every level (physical, emotional, mental) the intent of the given movement and successfully make choices to enhance the movement. A dancer who blindly and blankly reproduces movement is not a successfully educated dancer.

## Terminology

Several terms are used throughout this study: pedagogy, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. The term *pedagogy* can be defined as, “the art, science, or profession of teaching” (Merriam Webster, 1993). In turn, when using the term *pedagogical knowledge*, this refers to knowing about the best methods of teaching including how to arrange a classroom efficiently, conduct appropriate classroom management and discipline, create effective lesson plans and rubrics, select adequate methods for presenting material, and implement effective assessment strategies. Pedagogical proficiency consists of the combination of teacher’s perceptions of teaching; knowledge of subject matter and curriculum; understanding of students’ learning, potential, and preconceptions; and comprehension of instructional strategies (Chen, 2002; Grossman, 1990). For example, a dance instructor should know how to prepare a dance technique class in a safe and efficient manner that allows dance students to progress through movement patterns safely. It would be negligent for a dance instructor to begin a ballet class with leaps across the floor. The body needs time to warm up, stretch, and prepare for such activities.

*Content knowledge*, on the other hand, is most simply understanding of the subject matter (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008). The teacher must know the concepts and facts of the specific field. The issue becomes, does this individual with great content knowledge know how to transmit that knowledge to others? Research has found that some do not. In physical education, research has shown that regardless of the instructor’s personal ability at a skill, the instructor may not be able to relay that information to students. Chen (2002) and Rovegno, Chen, and Todorovich (2003) found that a teacher’s

own ability at a skill, for example, dribbling a ball, is not related to the teacher's ability to break down the steps and key concepts to teach another how to dribble a ball. The logic that simply because an individual has dribbling skills and abilities, the individual can automatically effectively teach it to another person, is faulty. As Ball et al. (2008) states:

Teachers must know the subject they teach. Indeed, there may be nothing more foundational to teacher competency. The reason is simple: Teachers who do not themselves know a subject well are not likely to have the knowledge they need to help students learn this content. At the same time, however, just knowing a subject well may not be sufficient for teaching. (p. 404)

Teaching effectively takes training. The notion that a skillful chemist or writer can also be an effective teacher is false. As Shulman (1986) points out, "mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless as pedagogically content-free skill" (p. 8).

Initially issues in the practice of teaching in education were researched broadly (Shulman, 1986). Little attention was paid to the subject matter (e.g., content knowledge). Issues with discipline or instruction were considered universal, crossing all subject matters. While this may be true that every subject has concerns with discipline and instruction, they are not the same, given the different environments in which subjects are taught. The structure of the subject, the background of the teacher, and the preconceptions of the students all influence the situations. Shulman (1986) identified this lack of focus on the subject matter as the "missing paradigm." Shulman argued that teacher education should not be compartmentalized, meaning teachers should not take courses in their specialty area and courses in education separately, but the two subject matters should be intertwined to create a better teacher. Shulman (1986) argued that when teachers are taught in such a detached manner the results are unsuccessful. He found that teachers either knew content, (i.e., content knowledge) and pedagogy (i.e., pedagogical

knowledge) was unimportant, or they knew pedagogy techniques (i.e., pedagogical knowledge), but lacked understanding of the content (i.e., content knowledge) (Shulman, 1986).

In 1986, Shulman developed a theoretical framework to bridge the gap between pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge and termed it *pedagogical content knowledge*. Shulman (1986) defined pedagogical content knowledge as:

the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations—in a word, the most useful ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others...Pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons. (p. 9)

Shulman's main argument claimed that knowing merely concepts and facts about a subject (i.e., content knowledge) does not make one an effective teacher. A teacher must understand what material is worth presenting (i.e., content knowledge) and how to present it effectively (i.e., pedagogical knowledge). A teacher must also realize not only what topics are pertinent in the field, but also why they are pertinent. Shulman's theory at its roots is the idea that it is not, "knowledge of content, on the one hand and knowledge of pedagogy, on the other hand, but...a kind of amalgam of knowledge and content and pedagogy" (Ball et al., p. 392).

Shulman claims that pedagogical content knowledge gives instructors the understanding of how to alter material to reach students better. Shulman (1987) asserts that pedagogical content knowledge "represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented

for instruction” (p. 8). This type of understanding is useful because it allows instructors to explain information in various ways that can spark an understanding for different types of learners. A teacher with great pedagogical content knowledge has such a breadth of knowledge about the curriculum that the teacher can reframe the subject matter in a way that students from diverse backgrounds can comprehend. If one pedagogical method is not effective for a set of students, the effective teacher can use a different pedagogical approach to present the same content in a different way in order for all students to learn. As Hollingworth (1989) pointed out, “Skilled teachers know how to merge knowledge of human learning, subjects, and pedagogy into specific tasks” (p. 163).

Shulman identifies this new way of thinking as a type of transformation. It allows the teacher, “to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by students” (Shulman, 1987). Educators should evaluate their knowledge base and then determine the most suitable pedagogical approach to best foster learning. This type of reflection leads to more effective teachers. As Shulman (1986) says, “pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from the pedagogue” (p. 8).

In dance education, pedagogical content knowledge is a useful tool to understanding the difficulties facing dance educators. Nearly all dance teachers possess content knowledge (Fortin, 1992). Most dance teachers have studied dance extensively and as mentioned previously have often danced professionally and are highly skilled dancers or choreographers. Fortin (1992) breaks this content knowledge down even further to identify two forms of content knowledge in dance: conceptual content

knowledge and technical content knowledge. *Technical content knowledge* is the knowing of how—in dance this means how to correctly execute a step or mastery of a specific technique. This requires much mimicry and basic level thinking. *Conceptual content knowledge*, on the other hand, is the knowing of why and about—this type of knowledge allows a teacher to describe accurately and effectively how a movement is done and why it is necessary and beneficial to perform a movement in a certain way. Teachers with this type of knowledge are also able to approach content in various ways to aid in students’ learning. If a teacher realizes that the students are not grasping the concept, the teacher can frame the material in a different light to generate new thinking about the idea.

Both types of content knowledge are important for dance educators. Often dance educators rely too heavily on technical content knowledge rather than the understanding, transforming, and reflecting of the material and how it can be presented to students. As previously mentioned, the historical evolution of dance could be a factor in the dominance of technical imitation. In addition, research in dance education is limited leading to minimal understanding of the best practices for dance teachers (Fortin, 1992). Clarkson (1988) refers to the complacent pattern of teaching from tradition as the “dancer’s close-minded approach to training” (p. 18). Penelope Hanstein (1990) identifies this problem stating:

when taught only as the replication of steps, as a closed system in which the ends are preset and the outcomes tightly controlled, we fail to promote the kind of inquiry, imaginative thinking, and discovery necessary for ordering our experience and making sense out of our lived world. (p. 56)

While it is obvious that development of dance technique is a central component of dance education, it is demeaning to reduce dance to a series of steps. A complete education in dance has much more to offer intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

It may be argued that if the goal of a dance program is to produce professional dancers, former professional dancers are best suited to educate these students. Fortin (1993) suggests this is not true. In fact, she argues that the result is quite the opposite. Individuals who studied in performance-based programs and then teach in performance-based programs are not challenged to question their practices. They simply continue the pattern.

Other countries and dance programs are working to give dance educators the pedagogical skills to strengthen dance education. The school of the professional company Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal provides a course in the pedagogy of dance for its instructors (Fortin, 1992). This demonstrates a shift in policy from relying solely on mastery of repertoire. Perhaps the best example of reforming dance education exists in France. In 1986 France declared that all dance students, performers, and choreographers who plan to be teachers must successfully complete an educational program provided by the government. A central goal of the program is to “ensure that professional dancers learn to transform their content knowledge into pedagogical formats suited to the characteristics of the students and settings in which they teach” (Fortin, 1992, p. 38). To earn this certificate individuals must pass practical examinations based on technical expertise and also display pedagogical content knowledge when teaching various types of students (Fortin, 1992). Programs like these illustrate the importance of identifying a “knowledge base for competent dance teaching” (Fortin, 1992, p. 34).



## Higher Education Dance Faculty

Dance faculty members come from a variety of backgrounds ranging from experiences in professional dance companies, dance education, physical education, exercise science, biology, ethnography, women's studies, and world studies. These experiences shape their approach to course work (Graber, 2001). It is understandable that a teacher's strengths would influence their pedagogy.

Studies in other areas have shown that teachers' orientations to content influence the way they teach the content. Grossman (1990) found that teachers' affiliation to literature affected the manner in which they approached various texts. Wilson and Wineburg (1988) discussed the ways in which high school social studies teachers' disciplinary backgrounds, ranging from political science to history, influenced the way they presented historical knowledge. For example, teachers who had strong backgrounds in political science viewed history as an accounting of fact rather than an area for interpretation and therefore tended to over generalize and offer historically inaccurate conclusions and representations to their classes. In contrast, teachers who had backgrounds in history regarded facts as the basis of "the narrative of history" (p. 528) and presented lessons that acknowledged historical context and engaged students in historical inquiry. Ball et al. (2008) reported similar occurrences in math education and science education. Although these results are high school based, they exhibit a pattern that could be present in college and university faculty members.

With dance teachers in higher education coming from various backgrounds, which influence their teaching approach, it is difficult to identify what knowledge is necessary for an effective dance teacher. Brooks Schmitz (1990) makes a valid point that,

“If we are serious about...the preparation of professional dance educators, current dance educators must engage in the difficult identification of the knowledge base required for competent teaching, and develop the materials and strategies to transfer this to students” (p. 61). Dance teachers need to examine what is necessary to make an effective dance teacher. Is basic content knowledge enough? Or are students in these situations only gaining rudimentary knowledge and not a true understanding of the purpose of the movement? If students are only learning movements without the history behind it or the intent and purpose of the movement, is that really quality dance education? Hanstein (1990) states:

The increasing complexity of our society requires us, and the students who will shape the future, to function in tasks that demand imaginative thinking and the ability to see the connection between means and ends, to take cognitive risks, and to extend thinking beyond the known in order to deal effectively with what might be rather than with what is. (p. 57)

Dance is a creative art form. The type of thinking fostered in a creative environment can be rich and deep involving a symbiotic relationship between the mind and the body.

When dance teachers only expect students to repeat movements (i.e., rote memorization), they underestimate the power of creative learning and the thought processes that can take place.

To date, no studies have researched the ways in which a dance teacher in a higher education setting might be influenced by their backgrounds and training. It might be assumed that teachers with pedagogy training would be more likely to use lesson plans, rubrics, and formal assessment as well as be more attuned to the needs of the students. Teachers with professional dance backgrounds might be more focused on technical proficiency and performance qualities. Both backgrounds and approaches may be

effective for student learning. Perhaps neither is true and other factors such as years of teaching experience, department requirements, and/or personality influence teaching. Regardless, external factors affect pedagogy.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how backgrounds and training affect faculty members' pedagogical approach to a dance technique class in a higher education dance department. The study will examine the pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge of the participants through observation, interviews, and document analysis.

## CHAPTER III: METHODS

Qualitative methods were used for this study to garner an in-depth analysis of the participants' backgrounds as well as their pedagogical approach for teaching dance technique. Qualitative research is generally used to gain knowledge about a certain phenomena from the perspective of those involved in the phenomena with respect to the context of the phenomena. Qualitative research is focused on an in-depth understanding of the participants and their surroundings relying heavily on emerging patterns from data collection (Glesne, 2006). As typical of qualitative research, data collection for this study involved observations, interviews, and written documents (Patton, 2002).

A case study methodological approach was used to investigate thoroughly a specific phenomenon, which was how the backgrounds and training of faculty members affect their pedagogical approach to teaching a dance technique class. Case studies are useful because they provide thorough investigation of a single unit of analysis (Patton, 2002). Separate case studies were compared in a cross-case analysis to identify patterns across cases (Glesne, 2006).

Data triangulation included three parts: (a) direct non-participant observations of dance technique classes; (b) semi-structured interviews with participants; and (c) analysis of instructor documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, and exams, when applicable. All data collection occurred in the winter and spring quarter of an academic school year.

### Participants

The participants were four faculty members at a higher education institution located in the Midwestern United States. The institution offers a dance major with a performance focus in a conservatory setting. The faculty participants were primary

instructors for a dance technique class for undergraduate dance majors. Participants instructed a variety of dance genres ranging from modern to ballet. Participants have a range of backgrounds and training. To gain knowledge about each participant's background and training a biography was collected from each participant as well as information from interview questions focused on their background and training. Participants were selected according to their willingness to participate as well as meeting the criteria for inclusion. All names have been changed to protect the participants' identities.

Stephen has been teaching at this specific university for ten years and is currently an Associate Professor. His early childhood training was in musical theater with some ballet training. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in dance from a university with a nationally ranked dance program. The program was, at the time of his attendance, specifically focused on ballet performance. During his time at the university he performed with the university performance company and regional companies in the area. Upon graduation he toured nationally with several musical theater tours. Eventually he accepted a teaching position at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest and found that his pedagogy skills were lacking. He began to take courses in a classical internationally renowned teacher-training program. He also earned his Master's of Science in dance from a major university in the Midwest. He then completed another internationally recognized teaching program. He taught at a nationally ranked performing arts high school and managed a regional company school bringing national recognition to their training philosophies. After his time there he accepted his current position at this university where he teaches ballet technique, pointe, variations, men's technique, pas de deux, choreography, and ballet

history. He also choreographs for the performing ensemble. Outside of his responsibilities as a faculty member, he also teaches at a local dance studio.

Teresa has been on faculty for 16 years and is currently an Associate Professor and Division Head. Her early training was at a prestigious dance school in the southern United States. She then earned her Bachelor of Arts in dance from a university in the western United States. During her time in college she began to teach dance at the university as well as perform for a professional ballet company in the area. Upon graduation, she earned a scholarship to a school for a prestigious nationally known modern dance company. Teresa left the program to travel internationally dancing with numerous modern-based dance companies. Teresa returned to the United States and entered a graduate program earning a Master's of Arts degree in dance with a pedagogy focus. During this time she also began teaching dance at a small university. She eventually accepted a teaching position at a small liberal arts college. When she failed to earn tenure, she left to pursue the position she now holds at this university. She also has a certification in a recognized movement technique. Teresa currently teaches modern technique, Alexander technique, character, and choreographs for the university performing ensemble. Teresa has many additional responsibilities to teaching due to her role as Division Head such as attending departmental and university meetings and recruiting prospective students.

Lee is currently an Associate Professor of Dance and has been at this university for 9 years. He originally trained at a government supported dance academy in Asia. He gained national stardom in his home country as a premier ballet dancer. He won numerous awards and performed on stage and film. He eventually traveled to America

and danced with several major dance companies as principal dancer. He became Ballet Master at his final dance company and simultaneously earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master's of Fine Arts in Dance from a university in the western United States. He currently teaches ballet technique, somatics, men's technique, variations, pas de deux, and choreography. He also choreographs for the university performing ensemble. In addition to his role as a tenured faculty member, he also is Artistic Director of a dance company and serves as panelist and judge on several national organizations.

Cheryl is an Assistant Professor and has been on faculty at this institution for 2 years. She began dancing professionally at the age of 13 with one of the premier ballet companies in the nation. She performed as soloist and principal dancer with this company. Cheryl partnered with some of the nation's leading male dancers and toured internationally performing the works of many famous choreographers. Cheryl recently completed the teacher training program in conjunction with her ballet company where she is also a teacher for their summer programs. Cheryl teaches ballet technique, pointe, variations, partnering, and repertoire at this institution.

#### Data Collection

Three primary sources of data were collected for this study. First, each participant was formally interviewed. Second, each participant was observed instructing a dance technique class. Finally, a document analysis was conducted on materials provided by the participants. These various forms of data collection were employed to achieve triangulation. Triangulation is used to add credibility and trustworthiness to a study by combining methods. The data collected from each source were examined to support or refute the data collected from a separate source (Patton, 2002).

## *Interviews*

Interviews were also used in this investigation to allow the researcher to understand the participant's perspective. When executed correctly interviews allow investigators "to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories" (Patton, 2002, p. 341). This investigation used a formal interview with the aid of an interview guide (Appendix). The interviews were formal as the interview was arranged in advance establishing the time and setting of the interview. The same interview guide (a list of questions or issues intended to be discussed) was used with each participant. The interview guide allowed flexibility for the interviewer to explore other issues raised or to delve deeper into certain topics. The questions created for the interview guide were a variety of experience and behavior questions, opinion and values questions, knowledge questions, and background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002).

Each participant was formally interviewed individually using the interview guide which allowed flexibility for follow up questions (Patton, 2002). Each participant was interviewed once before the first observation. Participants were asked about their education, training, and backgrounds as well as their teaching philosophy, content knowledge, and pedagogical approach to the class. Each interview lasted no more than an hour and was audio-recorded. The interviews were then transcribed and submitted to the participants for member checking. Member checking is a measure to ensure validity. According to Glesne (2006) member checking involves "sharing interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure you are representing them and their ideas accurately" (p. 38).



### *Observations*

Direct observations are used to “describe the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed” (Patton, 2002, p. 262). Naturalistic observations that take place in the field allow observers to see activities in a natural setting without controlling for variables. These observations allow researchers to understand the context in which a particular phenomenon occurs, observe a setting firsthand free of preconceived notions, and an opportunity to notice actions that may otherwise go unnoticed (Patton, 2002).

In this study, each participant was observed instructing a dance technique class two different times within the same quarter. Field notes focused on teacher behavior were recorded (Patton, 2002). The field notes recorded the instructor’s apparent portrayal and use of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. Direct quotations were captured whenever possible. Field notes also recorded the physical setting, the activities, and social interactions of the students and teacher. The investigator’s own thoughts, feelings, and reactions were recorded as well to offer additional insight (Patton, 2002).

An attempt was made to observe each participant teaching his/her area of expertise. Three of the participants were primarily ballet instructors and one a modern teacher. Lee and Cheryl were observed teaching ballet technique twice. Teresa was observed instructing modern technique twice. Stephen was observed teaching ballet technique once and pointe once, due to time constraints. Ballet and modern technique classes were one hour and thirty minutes. Pointe class was fifty minutes. Each class was

observed five minutes before the scheduled start time of class and five minutes after the actual end time of class.

### *Documents*

Documents can provide a wealth of information not present in observations or interviews. Documents are often unobtrusive and “provide historical and contextual dimensions to ...observations and interviews” (Glesne, 2006, p. 68). A course syllabus may clearly outline the objectives of the course and the expectations of the students. It may also be an example of pedagogical knowledge with a clear example of assessment strategies.

Collection of course documents such as syllabi, grading rubrics, and/or lesson plans were obtained to acquire a greater understanding of course objectives and pedagogical principles. These documents were used to support or refute findings in the observations and interviews (Patton, 2002). If any documents were not available to make copies of, notes were taken on the document's contents. Each participant submitted a syllabus for his or her dance technique class. Only one participant, Teresa, had any handouts for her class. Stephen mentioned a vocabulary handout both in the interview and in class, but did not have them available at the time. No participant had any written formal lesson plans to submit. A copy of the rubric for student progress was collected. These documents, including professional biography, were analyzed to create a profile of each instructor's background, training, and teaching practices.

### Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using content analysis. As Patton (2002) states, “...content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that

takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). Content analysis was used to identify core meanings referred to as patterns or themes. These patterns or themes are descriptive findings that categorize recurring phrases or notions in the data content (Patton, 2002).

This investigation used inductive analysis, which involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in the data (Patton 2002). This type of content analysis aids in determining what is significant. This involves recognizing, coding, classifying, and labeling the major patterns in the data. The field notes, interview transcripts, and course documents were reviewed and identified by key concepts relevant to the data. These labels were then reviewed for convergence—identifying what fits together. These categories were then tested for completeness. The completeness ensured that the data had internal and external plausibility, inclusively reflected data that exists, and presented a data set that could be reproduced by another competent researcher (Patton, 2002). The data set was then examined for divergence. This allowed the researcher to expand on the patterns and themes identified through convergence. The data was then converted into a narrative format that presented the major themes and patterns discovered with supporting examples, quotations, and illustrations from the data set (Glesne, 2006).

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine how background and training affect faculty members' pedagogical approach to a dance technique class in a higher education dance department. This study used interviews, observations, and document analysis to assess how dance faculty members think about, discuss, and actually teach a dance technique course. Through data analysis several themes began to emerge. A total of six themes surfaced from the data: desire to teach, teaching focus, challenging students, planning and preparation, instructional methods, and assessment strategies. Below each theme is identified and discussed using evidence from the observations, interviews, and documents.

### Desire to Teach

Reasons for the participants' desire to become a teacher varied. Not all of the participants wanted to be a teacher, but rather arrived at the occupation through circumstances. Two claimed they had always wanted to teach and began teaching at a relatively early age (i.e., Teresa and Cheryl). Two others began teaching when their professional dancing careers ended (i.e., Stephen and Lee). Two of the participants (i.e., Teresa and Stephen) identified monetary compensation as a reason for teaching. As mentioned previously, it is common for professional dancers to teach to earn money (Lakes, 2005). Most of the participants began teaching before they had any knowledge or training in teaching practices. They were thrust into teaching to earn money without any knowledge of how to teach, so most followed the patterns of their previous teachers.

For example, Teresa identified early on that she wanted to teach:

I also noticed that anytime I took a class I wanted to be a teacher more than I wanted to be a performer. Even when I was with [professional ballet company]

when the ballet master would be giving class I would be giving corrections to the kid in front of me. Before we turned around when the ballet master wasn't listening I would say, "You're sinking in your left hip." *WHISPERED WITH HAND OVER MOUTH...LAUGHTER* You know? So I always knew I wanted to teach. And I did it in any company I was always with. So whoever wanted corrections would stand in front of me because I could always see that stuff. I could just always see that stuff.

Teresa knew she had the desire to teach and began teaching at her undergraduate university as an undergraduate student. She did take one course in pedagogy in her undergraduate studies, but she described it as being a bit overwhelming, "That was a huge learning curve because we were lectured in the classroom [about teaching]...at the university and then we had to go out [into schools]...with nobody." This course was Teresa's only experience in teaching when she was asked to teach an undergraduate jazz course at the university. Teresa was chosen to teach a jazz technique course to other undergraduate students by a faculty member who observed her taking a jazz class as a first year undergraduate student. The faculty member believed Teresa was too advanced in technical skill to gain any knowledge or ability from the course, so the faculty member asked Teresa to teach despite any evidence that Teresa was a competent teacher. She stated:

So really when [a faculty member] asked me to teach the jazz class I had never taught. Ever. So I just did the same format that I had always taken...the teacher never came in and said anything about anything. So I was just totally on my own.

Teresa received no guidance from other teachers to improve her teaching practices. It appears her only qualifications for being asked to teach the jazz technique course were that she was observed in one class to be a skilled dancer. This is another example of skilled dancers being assumed to be adequate teachers. With no knowledge of best

teaching methods or how to create a class, Teresa was forced to rely on imitating the teaching practices of her teachers.

This practice of teaching as she had been taught continued for many years throughout her career. As Teresa traveled and danced with various companies she would also teach dance to earn money. She claimed on every occasion to be following the format of her previous teachers. About dancing with a company in Germany, Teresa stated:

And I started teaching tap privately at a school there. And they paid very handsomely for me to teach tap and so essentially I took the same format that my [childhood teacher] had taught me who I had had lessons with since I was 5 to 17. And just essentially taught her format of tap to these German kids.

It was not until Teresa entered graduate school that she began to learn any pedagogy principles. During her time in graduate school Teresa took courses in dance theory, dance pedagogy, and dance technique. Her pedagogy teacher also taught the technique course which allowed Teresa to see the principles in use. While earning her master's degree, Teresa accepted her first full time university teaching position where she created her first syllabi and developed her own curriculum.

Cheryl, on the other hand, had an interest in teaching from an exceptionally early age—eleven years old, but never took any courses in pedagogy until as recently as one year ago. She did not begin teaching as a means to earn money, but rather because she enjoyed the experience. Cheryl stated:

But as I was dancing I also had an interest in teaching classes. My mom had a school when I was young...a ballet school. And she had offered me to teach some of her classes as an experience. And it was. So I always had an interest in teaching. Because I thought, what a great thing...an opportunity. And I wound up being given that so many times and I was so grateful and honored for that from some of these greatest artists in ballet actually in several generations. So I feel honored that way, but I always thought it was a great idea once you learn

something and it's in a positive manner, pass it on to someone else. It's kind of a...just a good karma thing. It just...it just makes me feel good. Some people selfishly keep things to themselves. I feel...that's just...not creative.

Cheryl began teaching as a way to give back. She never took any courses in pedagogy, but rather used the formats of her former teachers to influence how she taught her classes. Cheryl taught throughout her career as a professional dancer and found the transition to teaching full time obvious. Her recent decision to complete a teacher-training program was more at the suggestion of a former colleague rather than her own desire to learn more. Additionally the program is affiliated with her former company and the company she teaches for in the summers:

And I did the teacher course last year at the emphasis of one of the directors of it, creators of it. He suggested...he saw me...he suggested that I come and do the course. It'll be fun. You'll see people you used to work with. And seeing that you're interested in learning more about the theories and things of dance and our curriculum and syllabus, the whole thing...you know because I was there [at the company] so long. It makes sense...perfect sense. And I teach for them.

Perhaps Cheryl's decision to complete this teacher-training program had more to do with her additional teaching jobs rather than to serve the students at this university. However, the knowledge she gained from the program may improve her teaching strategies all around.

Stephen did not necessarily intend to be a dance teacher, but rather began teaching as a way to make additional money as he continued to perform. He had taken one course in his undergraduate career in pedagogy, but found the course to be useless:

There was one class taught by the modern teacher who was kind of one of those crazy, you know, be a piece of bacon on the floor. *LAUGHTER* Didn't have a technique like a Graham technique or anything behind her. She taught a...I don't know...something for instruction of that and I did my teacher's thing on...kind of...musical theater stuff. We did our student teaching as choreograph[ing] musicals. So we didn't really have classes as such.

Stephen's memory of the course alone is unclear. The knowledge presented in this course clearly did not aid in any type of learning. This lack of preparation made it difficult for Stephen when he pursued a teaching position at a small university to earn money while performing. Stephen said, "So when we [Stephen and his wife] started teaching at the university we quickly realized that we didn't know how to teach." This lack of knowledge pushed Stephen to inquire about teaching from his colleagues. He found a fellow teacher offering a pedagogy course and began taking it:

And I was taking her class in addition to teaching some classes there and I...you know, I had been dancing professionally for almost ten years and had danced ballet since I was 13 and she told me things I had never heard before, vocabulary and theories and things. So we became very interested in what...because she was a fabulous teacher and so we started taking a couple of the courses.

This course inspired Stephen to take additional courses in several professionally established dance teacher-training programs. He also earned his master's degree in dance expecting to learn more about teaching, but found the program was more focused on performance, prompting him to continue taking teaching courses with professional companies. Stephen referred to these training programs several times as influencing his teaching. He was even nationally recognized for his pre-professional dance school and company at one point and credits his success to using these established syllabi. He does not use these same syllabi in his current courses at the university, but has modified the principles to apply to his current students.

Lee did not have an interest in teaching until quite late in his career. He did not teach during his time as a professional dancer. After his retirement from professional dance, Lee earned his undergraduate and graduate degree in dance education from a university while teaching at his former company.



When asked if he had always intended to be a teacher Lee replied:

No, no, no. I was really never...when you were dancing you were thinking what am I going to do, maybe a chef or a massage therapist. *LAUGHTER* What are you going to do when you stop dancing? You just think about...Before I go to [school to] get my degree, I was debating whether I should get my massage degree or...you know, it's like, kind of just trying to find something that's suited. I danced a very, very long [time]. When I go to school I was already in my thirties. You know, what else do you have? 18 years not possible. Computer science is not possible. So many things not possible. You are just looking for something that's possible. That's suited. So basically just falling into this.

Lee's attitude suggests that his career as a dance faculty member is one of chance. He possesses a specific set of skills. There are few careers that he can succeed at without attending school for many years. He never planned to become a teacher:

Kind of like falling into it, you know. I didn't really plan. Wasn't really, really planned before. When I was dancing [I] thought about something what I was going to do after dancing, but you really didn't really, really plan. Then you just...it's how your life is. It's always like that, you go after school and your job opening and the career criteria and then your background is almost exactly like what you have. You have this background. Like they are looking for faculty member. You need to have a master's degree. You need to dance professionally with recognized companies. You just say, "Oh I have all that." *LAUGHTER*. You send in a letter. Oh I got it. It's almost like it's planned that way for you.

This "accidental" career as a pedagogue may hinder his desire to learn or improve his teaching. He may not be dedicated to the needs of his students. He expressed no desire to learn to teach, but simply needed to earn a degree and was best suited for dance. He chose to take the dance education courses because he was too advanced for the performance track in both technique and age.

In summary, two of the participants (i.e., Teresa and Cheryl) always desired to teach and began teaching at an early age. Two other participants (i.e., Stephen and Lee) began teaching when their professional dance performance careers ended. Two participants (i.e., Stephen and Teresa) claimed to teach initially to earn money. All

participants began teaching dance before ever taking any courses in dance pedagogy. Each participant was first asked or hired to teach due to their apparent technical skill as a dancer. To compensate for lack of teaching knowledge, the participants followed the teaching practices of their former teachers.

### Teaching Focus

The participants had various foci for their classes. They also identified different sources as having the greatest impact on their teaching practices. Two of the participants claimed the students as having the greatest impact on their teaching. Being aware of student needs is a key concept of pedagogical content knowledge. These participants have altered their teaching practices as they have gained experience and learned what better serves the students. Stephen said, “So, I think my teaching philosophy has kind of evolved.” He spoke of initially using established syllabi from renowned dance companies, but as he used them and reflected on what was working and what was not, he altered his teaching practices. Stephen said:

I've been teaching a long time now and I think that one of the other things that I've found is that my philosophy has evolved and softened somewhat. I think now especially with the younger dancers that the way you motivate people is not the old stick and chair and "Do this." But you know it has to be positive reinforcement and things like that.

Teresa also spoke about changing her teaching practices. It is important to her to learn new techniques and ideas and then explore them in the classroom. She is often teaching the students new means of movement. In her classes she tells the students where she learned a certain technique and why it is valuable. Teresa stated:

I'm constantly changing the way I teach. Constantly. I'll take a class. On my sabbatical I was taking class with co-directors of this company in Miami and I really liked their class structure. So I tried that on for size a little bit this term, and I'm like, “oh I don't know.” I kinda like this better or that better. I'm always trying

new things and what feels good in my body...Always...yeah...always learning. That's the thing I love about teaching.

Teresa went on to discuss the struggle she has had with students not understanding the importance of basic movement principles. She said she has gotten varying feedback from the students, but continues to work from the basics and build on that. She builds her classes around the needs of the students. She refers to student needs in the sense of technical ability, physical health, and thought processes but rarely mentions needs of socialization or discipline. When she was asked what has had the biggest impact on her teaching, Teresa immediately responded, “The students. What they need. Totally. What they need in that moment.” She shared that some students do not grasp the concepts right away and become frustrated with the repetition or simplicity of her class, but she says:

You know the thing you have to realize is you can't please anybody all of the time, not even half the people. So you just have to follow your heart and what you think is for their better good. And really I mean teaching is, you know, not very self serving. It is a completely service-oriented profession. So, you see what their needs are, like I said, in that moment or in this quarter. You know half of them don't have a clue where their pelvis is. So let's understand where your pelvis is first. And then let's go on. And then, you know, they don't know how to go to the side with out going into a spiral. Well until we can get this basic concept under control then, you know...okay, good, took us three classes to get there. Now we'll try this into this into this. Can you do that? No. Okay. And then three classes later we can go here and here and here and here and here and with head leading and spine following from the top joint in an organic way and buh buh buh buh, you know? So it's just like what can they do? What do they need to do? How are we gonna get them there? So yeah, I'd say it's really student driven.

Teresa focuses her class around the needs of the students and adjusts. If the students are not ready to move on from a specific concept, Teresa adjusts the class plan to make sure they fully understand. Stephen shares Teresa's belief that student needs have the biggest impact on teaching. When Stephen was asked the same question about what has had the biggest impact on his teaching, he responded, “I think the students more than anything.”

It is interesting that the two faculty members with the most educational training cited student needs as having a major impact on their teaching and that they have shifted their teaching practices to better serve students; however, the other two faculty members with greater professional dance backgrounds stated that their training has had the biggest impact on their teaching. Cheryl responded to the same question of what has had the biggest impact on her teaching saying, “All the training and all of the great artists I’ve read about in books and having had them coach me. All those little things and the fact of what quality of people they were.” She went on to speak about her time touring Europe and attending museums and shows and how this made her a well-rounded individual which she could then bring to her performances and now brings to her teaching. Lee also shared that his training and experiences gave him knowledge that he can now share with the students.

These differences in approach are also evident in their classroom teaching practices. Stephen and Teresa spent time in class discussing movement theories, historical principles, and vocabulary. For example, Stephen often asked students in class to spell a dance term. This often proved difficult for the students. Stephen frequently asked students the literal meaning of the French terminology and which of the seven categories of movement specific steps fall under. He also asked them historical questions about the beginnings of ballet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, Teresa asked questions about movement initiation and movement principles. She asked the students to watch one another and provide feedback. When injured students were sitting out during class, they were required to take notes on class and then share those notes at the beginning of the following class. Teresa also gave students the opportunity in class to explore movement

on their own or with a partner. She often gave them movement problems and asked them to solve them.

Lee and Cheryl, on the other hand, spent time in class discussing performance qualities and advice for auditions. Lee tried to connect their experiences in the classroom to those on stage. In class he said things like, “Can you see if you can not rely on this barre? You will push your partner away.” In another instance when the class was practicing jetés, Lee said, “Dancers you must be very sure of two jetés. There are two different kinds of jetés.” Lee demonstrated and discussed the differences between a Vaganova jeté and a Balanchine jeté stating that students must know the difference when auditioning for a company. He claimed, “It is necessary to distinguish the difference. Know what the director wants.” Cheryl spent time asking the students to perform and create a story through their movement while in class. She spoke of famous ballet dancers who have great performance qualities and that those qualities were developed in class. Cheryl said to the students, “Make it interesting. The simplest things can be the most incredible to watch.” Cheryl spoke earnestly about how important it is to be present and prepared, “Not just it’s Tuesday. It’s class. It’s gloomy. Create a story in every little thing.” Cheryl explained to the students that storytelling and performance are what directors are looking for. As she instructed the next movement combination, Cheryl talked about adjusting to live music on stage. She said, “Make it work. Make it really special. Not just ‘oh good, that’s over.’” Cheryl was often asking students to make their movement special and how that will get the students noticed in an audition:

I will give them points of when I hold an audition...and you know what you basically are looking for. And you want someone who is interesting...You can just stand there and be interesting. And the girl that’s dancing and doing all these things and you could care less, "Oh she's so boring."

Lee and Cheryl are attempting to connect the classroom experiences to real life situations in career preparation. They are relating the work in the classroom to moments in auditions or moments in performance, so students can understand the value of technique class. Most of their students intend to pursue a career as a professional dancer. These two faculty members in particular have many years of experience as professional dancers, so they possess valuable knowledge for these students. They want the students to be well prepared for auditions so they have a greater chance of getting a job.

It was observed that Teresa and Stephen preferred to spend more instructional time on theory, history, and vocabulary while Cheryl and Lee preferred to spend instructional time on performance qualities and audition techniques. Similarly Teresa and Stephen cited student needs as impacting their teaching practices while Cheryl and Lee claimed their training as having the greatest impact on their current teaching practices. These differences in approaches are telling of the ways the participants' background and training have shaped their teaching practices. They clearly value different principles. Despite these differences, all approaches may benefit the students.

### Challenging Students

All participants used their role as a faculty member to challenge their students to use higher order thinking skills about their dancing. All participants stated that they hoped to challenge the students to approach movement differently. Cheryl stated that she wants students to think about the steps and why they are doing them rather than simply imitating the movement. Cheryl asked the students:

Why are you doing a step? What's the reason behind your step? What are you going to accomplish from the step? Is there any power or strength behind the step? Anything emotional about the step? You can go crazy over a step. Or you can just be a boring person and just go about and do that step.

Cheryl went on to say she hopes her queries will lead the students to a greater understanding. She wants to help find what works for students:

It's a new way of thinking and perspective. And it could be the same thing and it's just some teacher happens to shed a little bit more light than the other one and they go, "Oh they said exactly the same thing, but now I see. Wow. The sun is out, before I didn't."

Stephen shares this feeling of hoping to bring students to a new way of thinking about movement. He said, "I mean all those technical things anybody can teach them, you know, to point their feet. I like to have them think differently about how they point their feet, so maybe it clicks on something. You know, I say it differently." Stephen elaborated that he wants students to approach movement more thoughtfully and examine the basic principles of movement:

I guess one thing I find with university students is that I...one of my big things especially with the incoming classes is that I want them to think...to explore things differently, to think about things differently. I mean most of them especially the girls have been taking since they were six... We're an audition program so I mean they've already accomplished a certain level of technical proficiency to be here. So you know, they come in and I'm asking them, "Why do you do this? Why do you do pliés? Why do you do, you know, why do we do this order?" So I mean I try to question and make them think differently. You know, doing tendues, for example, you know, instead of thinking of tendues, you know, like they do in modern...how much weight you put determines the speed of the tendu...something like that.

Stephen and the other participants want to foster a new way of thinking in the students. They want the students to think intelligently about movement rather than simply repeat the movement.

Nearly all of the participants hoped the students would begin to think analytically about movement. They all spoke of the students entering the program with a certain level of technical proficiency. The instructors now hoped to expand their knowledge by challenging their current thinking. For example, during a modern technique class Teresa

asked the students, “All movement initiates where?” The students responded, “Top shelf” (referred to in this sense as the upper torso and head). Teresa asked, “Do you believe that?” Some students responded, “No.” Teresa asked, “Why?” A student said he didn’t understand how wiggling your finger initiates from the “top shelf.” Teresa led a discussion on how all intent for movement begins somewhere. She explains why movement begins in the “top shelf.” Teresa says, “Explore it. Figure it out. Don’t take my word for it.” She goes on to say you have to be connected and aware to really move from the top shelf. Teresa informs the students that dance is about making choices and each choice is valid. This type of exploratory discussion is a great example of pedagogical content knowledge. Teresa wants students to *know* for themselves.

Cheryl identified one of her main goals of class as challenging the students’ minds as well as their bodies. She wanted classes to be spontaneous and interesting. She feared that students would blankly follow through class without really being present. She said, “I give harder exercises as well...for the brain as well as the body, so they, ‘What?’ ‘Ah, you should have this. That’s it. Who’s paying attention?’” During barre work Cheryl often gave combinations that had frequent direction and pattern changes. Cheryl continued giving an example:

And I try to teach that in classes that I teach...not just teach a ballet class. If you know what I mean...or oh we’re having a variation, and I ask the guy to start playing...the accompanist, can you play some funky music? Some crazy music or just do Gershwin. I don’t know. Anything. Something opposite of the typical ballet music because then you use different muscles. Your brain is used differently. It’s a whole different experience.

Cheryl wanted to keep students guessing so they cannot remain stagnant in class. She attempted to vary class by surprising students:



And they have to be able to go off of, "Okay I'm going to throw you off. I'm not going to give you what I was going to give you." I mean I might have challenging combinations and now we're doing easy and we're going to go from reverse or have the guys start or go from this side of the room or face away from the mirror. Let's confuse things a little bit to change. It exercises the brain also. Keep Alzheimer's at bay.

This type of instruction keeps students engaged in class. The idea is that if a student is not present or engaged the student will not be able to adjust to the changing music, movement, style, tempo, and/or directions.

Lee often challenged the students in his classes. He asked the students to face different directions during certain combinations in an effort to keep students from becoming complacent and not relying on the mirror. In one instance he asked the students to perform a combination without the pianist or any musical accompaniment. The students appeared lost and could not perform the combination properly. Lee said, "You can't do it without music. You are so spoiled. Lots of places don't have live music." Lee explained to the students that they should not rely on the music, but "have the music within you." Lee also gave the students the opportunity to take ownership of their movement and create their own movement patterns. During the reverence portion of class, Lee allowed the students to do whatever movement they like. The students performed movement from ballet, modern, yoga, and creative movement.

The participants valued challenging the students in technique class. Each participant stated the importance of developing higher order thinking skills about dance in students and then actually spent time in class working on those skills. The participants used varied music, direction changes, memorization, and movement exploration to challenge the students' current understanding of dance. The participants often asked the

students “why” and “how” questions to develop analytical skills about movement—an important aspect of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

### Planning and Preparation

The level of planning was different for each participant. While no participant wrote formal lesson plans, some did write a rough idea of what they intended to teach for the class. Teresa stated:

Sometimes I write it down...like if I'm working on it the night before. Cause I won't remember it. And even if I come up with something like I really wanna find a jump that's got a turn that's got a down to the ground and I haven't come up with it by the time I'm coming here I'll just have it in my head. And then sometimes I'll get here and you know we'll do the floor [warm-up] and I'll know that I wanna start the [Alexander] inverse breathing. I want to introduce that. So I'll introduce that. I know I wanna do something for Frank because his ribs are still hurt and I wanna do something off center. And I wanna do something with the head really focusing on you know a side, [choreographer Merce] Cunningham-type side because last class was atrocious. So I'll come up with a sequence like that... Yeah, I'd say probably I write stuff down maybe not even half the time. And I just have it in my head. And then other times I kind of know what I wanna focus on and I come up with the sequence in class.

Teresa considered the needs of the students in her planning. She made a specific note about a certain student having an injury. She accommodated her classes for the students. She also was aware of what students are “getting” and what concepts she needs to reintroduce. This attention to student needs and adjusting to teaching difficult concepts in a new way is a major component of pedagogical content knowledge.

Lee planned his classes in advance. He established major goals for the class that are set out in the syllabus. He used these goals as a guideline for the quarter. Therefore, he had a general idea of what he would focus on each week. However, Lee allowed room for change. He paid attention to the students, so he could adjust if need be:

I write out what I [plan to] apply for the whole quarter. I have a rough plan. But sometimes there are...spontaneous things happen in a class. Sometimes they like

more. Sometimes they like less. And I can adjust a little bit... a little more flexible in a way.

Lee is also exhibiting characteristics of pedagogical content knowledge by being aware of the needs of the students and reacting appropriately.

Cheryl did not formally write any notes down to plan for class. She believed the changing environment of the classroom informed her teaching. Cheryl said, "Basically I teach something to them each class, but I try not to limit myself because each day you wake up differently and the students are different." While Cheryl did not officially write down specific lessons, she did write down goals or concepts she wanted the students to work on, "Oh I have loads of notes, but I'll just make a note to myself at the end of a month maybe of...okay, need to work more on blah blah blah...more emphasis on blah blah blah...and then I try to give more of the exercises..." Cheryl attempted to stay aware of the needs of her students. She did not comment on how often she referred to these notes or if she discussed these missed concepts with the students or other faculty members.

Stephen, on the other hand, did not plan his classes. He credited his teaching experience as giving him enough knowledge to not plan his classes, "I mean at this point in my career I don't prepare classes." Stephen believed that the stability of teaching the same students everyday did not demand preparation. He works with these students consistently, so he was familiar with their needs and that allowed him to enter class without preparation, "I don't prepare primarily because I am teaching the same people a lot." Stephen also identified his teaching style as "intuitive." He said he has always had the ability to know what students need and that informs his teaching:

I guess I work pretty intuitively in this classroom that if I see something that is a mistake then I try to do the next exercise series to work on that...I usually have some kind of theme of the week. So like one week I might be working on rhythmic things. And the next week I might be working on more transitional por de bras and things like that. So I usually have a theme of the week that I use. In my classes here especially, I set my pliés on Monday and I do that plié all week. And I usually do the adage all week and build on it from one day to the next. But other than that I'm pretty free flying...I never really in ballet class sat and wrote out long hand what I was going to do. The few times that I tried that I'd be looking at my notes and I felt like I couldn't teach. So I've always been pretty intuitive.

Stephen even claimed that writing down a lesson plan hindered his teaching. He was a better teacher when he was free of the restrictions of his notes. However, it is clear that he did have some form of a plan since he maintained the same plié and adagio combination all week.

Despite some participants' claims to writing down ideas or having a guideline or notes, no instructor had a notebook in the classroom. During observations, not one participant referred to any written work before, during, or after class.

In summary, the participants' formal planning and preparation techniques were minimal. Each participant had a department required syllabus for each technique class. No participant had any written formal lesson plans nor were they observed referring to any written notes in technique class. All participants claimed to have a general idea for the focus of class in mind, but did not find it useful to write it out. The participants appeared to rely on their years of experience as dancers and teachers to allow them to spontaneously create the movement combinations in class. This type of preparation did not appear to hinder the participants' instruction. There was little to no lag time between movement combinations.

## Instructional Methods

All participants instructed classes by verbally saying movement phrases and demonstrating. Some relied on more of one than the other, but all did both. Some would say the proper names of the ballet or modern movements such as, "Tendue from first." Others used qualities of the movement or sounds like, "Brush" or "Buh, bum." At other times instructors counted the movement while demonstrating saying, "And one, and a two, three to four." Generally the participants would either mark (attempting movement in a slower, smaller manner) certain parts of the combination as the students danced or would give verbal cues, frequently both. Sometimes the instructor did a specific step as the students did it to show the quality the instructor wanted from the students. When Teresa was asked about her instructional methods she responded:

I use my voice. I use my hands. I use my body. I'm dressed out [in dance attire] fully. I demonstrate everything fully. And I also use verbal cues. And I also use a lot of imagery. And Alexander cuing. And I use my hands a lot.

The participants used various instructional methods to reach all types of learners. Teresa in particular participated fully in class as if to set a standard of expectations of how she expected students to behave.

Most participants were standing and/or moving throughout the class. Only Stephen ever sat down. He sometimes sat in a chair at the front of the class and verbally instructed the students. He defended this instructional choice saying:

You know, I do, I do mark the combinations that I want most of the time. But I also do a lot of, especially in the center, I say a lot of things, again not only because I feel it's... I don't necessarily want to do it myself, but also because I think it's important for them to be able to pick up combinations without being spoon fed. And I think for kids today it is a lot easier for them to just watch something because they're so use to watching something. You know it's like trying to get choreography, you know, me trying to reset a ballet from video is like pulling teeth, but I can turn it on and they know the ballet like that. *SNAPS*

*FINGERS*. You know, so I think they're so visually oriented that I sometimes just make them [listen]...I give them the names of the steps.

By only verbally saying the instructions for the movement combinations, Stephen is challenging the students' knowledge of the meaning of the terms. The students must actively listen to be sure of the direction, timing, and steps.

While all participants did demonstrate movement they all "marked" the movement. No participant demonstrated at full performance level. Lee explained his instructional practices saying:

I demonstrate as much as I can. Because I believe, you know, dance as an art, because visual is still important. The students will get the message by you demonstrating better than [if you] just keep talking. But when you get older, you might be different, you might be different with more experience you might talk better. At this point I have to talk, but at the same time I still rely a lot on my demonstration.

Lee values demonstrating movement, but suggests that his lack of teaching experience may be a reason he relies on demonstration. He also points out the impact age has on his ability to demonstrate. Many of the other participants cited age as determining factor for their instructional methods. Stephen said:

Well that's changed over the years too. I mean, I'm getting to the point...I'm 60, so 61, I guess. And I...I hurt. *LAUGHTER*. So I mean I do demonstrate a little bit...I'm demonstrating less and less because my technique itself is not something I want, you know, imitated.

Cheryl, the youngest participant, also stated that her physical abilities impacted her instructional choices:

I would hate to get to the point where I couldn't actually [demonstrate] and I just have to speak words. To me that would just be really difficult. And I hope I never have to. I hope I know the sense to stop because that wouldn't be as fun. I can't physically do everything that's why I stopped—injuries. And last year showing some of the kids, you know, doing something and it wound up...I did it as when I was in great shape and I hadn't danced in eight years and I tore a ligament. So just like that and I heard it pop and I thought, "Oh, how interesting." And I was in a

cast and I just got better just recently. Like recently. Fourteen month injury. Yeah, quite amazing. So you forget. And you wanna show or I wanted to show and go this...because it used to be easy for me, not oh I just took eight years off.

Cheryl wanted to demonstrate the proper form for certain movement, but due to her own physical limitations, she could not. The age and physical abilities of the participants has influenced their teaching practices.

Interestingly only during the adagio combinations in the ballet classes did the instructors teach using only demonstration with out any verbal cues. All three ballet instructors exhibited this behavior. The participants also moved the class along quickly rarely asking if there were any questions. Often Lee would finish instructing and quickly say, "Get it?" then ask for music without waiting for a response. Cheryl explained this behavior saying:

The speed of my combinations...that's another exercise. You're not meant to repeat the same thing seven times. You're really not meant to repeat it more than once. You're meant to get it after the teacher says it once, but I do speak very fast. Some groups I'll have to speak slower, "Okay. We're gonna go from here." My tendency usually for class because that's what I learned is that is part of being a valuable member of a ballet company is you're fast, you're sharp, you pay attention because that means you're interested.

The participants did not spend a lot of time talking in between combinations because they wanted to keep the students moving and safe. To avoid injuries, the instructors wanted the students to stay warm and active. This is another reason the instructors moved quickly through class. Lee said:

I also want the class to keep flowing. You spend too much time talk[ing], they get cold. The experience come[s] from myself being a dancer, you don't really want the class like standing there listening for someone talking for very long. But you wanna keep moving.

The instructors have to find a balance between giving feedback and giving movement.

The instructors want to keep their minds sharp, so they give combinations quickly forcing

them to pay attention. Being able to learn combinations quickly is also a valuable skill in the audition process.

The instructional methods of the participants were traditional for a dance technique class. The participants instructed by verbally saying the movement and physically demonstrating the movement. The participants generally instructed in this manner for all movement combinations. All three ballet instructors (i.e., Stephen, Lee, and Cheryl) only physically demonstrated the adagio combination. Stephen was the only participant to choose to only verbally instruct portions of the class. All participants claimed age as a determinant in their current instructional methods. The participants also used their instructional methods as a way to improve students' ability to learn quickly.

#### Assessment Strategies

The participants had varying means of assessing student learning. The department had conferences with each of the students. All four faculty members were present and they met with the students to discuss their progress. Stephen described this process:

Well here we have examinations and we have boards. So at the first quarter each year we do a set class, and then we all watch each other's levels and they're graded, not necessarily individually, but we make notes on each of the dancers. And then we have conferences after that where we call them in and talk about their specific things. In the spring they each choose a variation, which they've learned over the course of the year. They've learned three variations each quarter, so they have nine, usually eight or nine variations they can choose from. Then we work with them. And they do that onstage, videotaped. We bring them in. They watch the videotape. Say they're terrible. We tell them, "You're not that terrible, but this is what you can work on". *LAUGHTER*. Um, so that's kind of our assessment.

This practice allowed the students to receive feedback from all faculty members whether they were their primary teacher. It also allowed the students to develop a relationship with the faculty members. Cheryl commented, "It makes it more personal. Yeah, with the



students...one on one. It's really nice. I think then they don't feel peer pressure when they are sitting [and] we're having a conference.”

Aside from the conferences, most of the assessment strategies were based on teacher interpretation. When asked about how she assesses if the students are learning Cheryl said, “It takes about maybe 20 seconds? It doesn't take long. It's just something in their eye, look, pay attention.” Cheryl used her own judgment to assess if students were working and fully engaged in class. Lee also used his personal assessment, “Most times I feel like I can feel when my class is working, but there are sometimes class [is] not working probably we [would] sit down to talk about it.”

According to the syllabi collected from each class, the majority of the students' grades are determined by attendance, participation, and attitude. Lee stated:

The grades will be...here we have sort of started to realize that regardless of their capability, attendance is very important. We always want you to fully participate and attend. That would be...majority of the grades come from that. Their improvement. Their attitude. Their quality. Their concentration. So this put together.

This importance on attendance was not evident in the classroom. Only Teresa actually recorded attendance in class. The department had a policy that if a student was too injured or ill to participate in class the student may sit out and take notes on the class. The student was asked to write the movement phrases from class, the corrections, and personal corrections the student sees for other students. Again only Teresa collected or utilized the notes the students took. Teresa asked the students sitting out to share their comments with the rest of the class often sparking discussion about movement, technique, and placement.

The only written component for the ballet courses was a common exam given to all students. The exam covered spelling, translation, and definitions of ballet terminology and was only given once a year. According to the syllabus it only counted for 5% of the students' total grade. In the modern technique class, the students were required to attend a live dance performance and write a critique. This assignment was also worth 5% of the students' grade. Lee said, "They spend a lot of time to do that [earn grade] physically...to get that full credit hours of work. So we don't really require any extra writing."

The participants did not use formal objective assessment strategies. The majority of student grades (i.e., 50%) were determined by attendance despite the observation that only one participant (i.e., Teresa) ever recorded attendance. Another portion (i.e., 45%) of students' grades consisted of the teacher's impression of improvement, effort, and attitude. The remaining portion (i.e., 5%) of the students' grades was determined by a written component. The faculty did meet with the students one at a time twice an academic year to discuss the student's progress and future goals, however it was unclear how this impacted the students' grades.

### Summary

The participants varied in backgrounds and training as well as teaching practices. The participants came to be teachers by varying means, but each valued their role as an educator. While the participants' background did influence their teaching practices the knowledge presented was valuable for the students. The participants sought to challenge the students' current ways of thinking and guide the students to higher order thinking skills about movement and dance. The planning and preparation of the participants was relatively minimal, but each claimed their years of experience as preparation to allow

them to enter the classroom without written preparation. The participants used diverse instructional methods as a way to challenge students to be aware and present in class. Additionally the participants cited age and physical limitations as a determinant of their instructional methods. The assessment strategies of the participants were minimal and subjective. The participants displayed attributes of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge to varying degrees.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge of dance faculty members as well as the way these knowledge bases are shaped by their backgrounds and training. To investigate the participants' beliefs and practices a formal interview was conducted with each participant. The questions for the interviews were shaped around the types of knowledge being studied. To better understand each participant's pedagogical knowledge, questions about lesson planning, assessment strategies, and instructional methods were posed. Content knowledge was examined through observations and the participants' discussions of their experiences in dance. Pedagogical content knowledge was investigated through questions of teaching focus and teaching practices as well as classroom observations.

The initial theme to emerge from the data was the participants' desire to become a teacher. Two of the participants began teaching for the monetary benefits despite their lack of pedagogical preparation supporting De Mille's (1973) claim that a person can teach when they know the structure of a dance class regardless of any teaching knowledge or experience. Two of the participants began teaching when their professional careers ended, one of them stating he never desired to be a teacher. Despite not having a lifelong desire to teach, the participants in this case did have a vested interest in the success of the students. Additionally these participants sought training in educational theories to improve their teaching abilities. Therefore in this case, Lakes' (2005) assumption that professional dancers or choreographers teach without any knowledge of educational theories is not supported.

The results in this study do confirm that dance teachers teach as they were taught (Gray, 1989; Clarkson, 1988; Lord, 1984). All of the participants mentioned following the teaching patterns and practices of their former teachers particularly before taking any courses in pedagogy. However, even after taking courses in pedagogy the participants mirrored the practices of their former teachers. Researchers have purported that this teaching is ineffective (Lakes, 2005); however, in this case the participants mirrored their teaching practices after excellent teachers, so the teaching was effective.

In this study background and training did not impact the participants' abilities as a teacher as much as it impacted the participants' teaching focus in class supporting numerous other studies' findings that a teacher's relationship to content influences their teaching focus (Ball et al., 2008; Grossman, 1990; Wilson et al., 1988). The participants with greater experience in education spent instructional time on theories, vocabulary, and history. These participants wanted to provide information that would produce well-rounded dancers with a greater knowledge of the "why" and "how" of dance. The two participants with greater performance experience spent instructional time on performance quality and audition preparedness. These participants aimed to provide information that would benefit the students in the auditioning process and career longevity. Neither of the approaches was harmful to student learning. In fact, both provide useful information for the students. In regards to this conservatory setting, the career preparation is particularly useful since the program focus is performance. Another dance program with a focus on education or choreography might value faculty members who focus on those areas. It may be most beneficial to have a mixture of faculty to provide a breadth of knowledge to the students.

The participants attempted to challenge the students in many ways. The participants presented opportunities to challenge the students' physical, mental, emotional, musical, and performance abilities. Promoting higher order thinking skills and challenging students are major components of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). The faculty presented material in various manners to reach all types of learners and allow the students to see the information in different ways. The participants used various instructional methods—demonstration, verbal instruction, and/or both. Participants often spent time discussing “why” certain concepts were important to dance. All participants displayed attributes of pedagogical content knowledge despite their pedagogical training.

The participants did not spend much time on or value planning and preparation, at least not in the formal sense. Not one participant wrote any form of a lesson plan for classes. And no participant had any written notes during class in which to refer. The participants appeared to create the movement combinations spontaneously in class. The participants attributed their lack of formal planning to years of experience either as a teacher or a student. This may be adequate as no time in class was spent waiting for the teacher to create the combination. The teachers were ready to instruct the next combination as soon as the students were finished performing the previous movement phrase. The participants did claim that often they have a general outline for the class in mind. This appears to serve them well for planning and preparation.

The instructional methods of the participants were traditional for a dance class. For the most part all participants instructed verbally and physically. According to field observations the participants displayed instructional methods sound in pedagogical

knowledge. The participants used various types of instruction to reach various types of learners—a characteristic of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). In some instances participants used specific instructional methods to challenge the students. The participants also cited their age as an impact on their instructional choices. The physical limitations of their bodies have forced them not to demonstrate at a high level.

The assessment strategies of the participants were minimal and subjective. The students had one major opportunity for feedback from the faculty per quarter—a performance assessment conference. Therefore, other than verbal feedback received in class, the students had little information about their progress in the course. The participants and the syllabi stated that assessment was, for the most part, the instructor's interpretation of the students' improvement, attitude, and effort. The only objective assessments were the written work, a minimal portion of the grade, and attendance, which only one teacher recorded. The participants did not view formal assessments as a useful tool for monitoring student progress or giving feedback.

Overall the findings suggest that the type of training (e.g., higher education versus professional experience) may not be as important as the quality and length of training. The participants in the present investigation have studied dance at a high level for many years. Whether the training was in the professional realm or in the form of higher education, the participants were still knowledgeable in their specific area (i.e., content knowledge) and capable of sharing that information with students (i.e., pedagogical content knowledge). The years of experience and certainly their personalities play a role in their effectiveness. All types of background and training may be adequate as long as they are of high quality and extensive. For example, it may be inappropriate for an

individual with only dance training at a local dance studio or only experience in a few dance courses at a university to be teaching dance at a higher education institution. The knowledge base of these individuals may not be great enough to educate students or provide them with the information necessary to foster learning. These individuals did not receive high quality training for an extended amount of time.

Certainly the needs of the university must be taken into consideration. For universities offering specialized degrees in dance, it is crucial to find faculty members with extensive training, professional or educational, in dance. Dance programs with a performance focus may be more inclined to hire faculty members with dance performance backgrounds whereas dance programs with a pedagogy focus may seek instructors with pedagogy training. Whatever the focus of the program, it is important that dance faculty members possess extensive dance knowledge.

The participants here were well versed in content knowledge. Specifically, they were adept in Fortin's (1992) concepts of *technical* content knowledge and *conceptual* content knowledge. As demonstrated during observations, each participant utilized correct terminology, correct physical demonstration, and correct progressions. They also spent time discussing why movement is done and how it is done intelligently.

If the participants lacked knowledge it was in the area of pedagogical knowledge. While the participants were adept at instruction, they lacked skills in class management. As previously reported, no participant wrote formal lesson plans. The forms of assessment were minimal and mainly subjective. The participants displayed no use of discipline/behavior management methods. The students would frequently talk to each other during class while waiting for their turn to perform an exercise, however, not once



did a teacher ask them to stop talking. This may be the nature of the department or perhaps the instructors did not find it disruptive to the class environment. Only one instructor visibly took attendance despite the claim from all four participants of attendance accounting for 50% of the students' grades. Each participant exhibited poor use of time management. Not a single class observed began at the scheduled start time. Only Cheryl ended class on time. Every other participant held class past the end time—ranging five minutes to twenty minutes over. While the participants displayed appropriate instructional methods, they were deficient in class management principles.

It is interesting that all participants possessed pedagogical content knowledge despite their lack of some areas of pedagogical knowledge. Furthermore, if they did possess pedagogical content knowledge regardless of any training in pedagogy how did they come to this knowledge? The data implies that the participants were following the teaching patterns of former teachers and using their own experiences as a basis for curriculum. This leads to the conclusion that these participants must have studied with teachers who possessed pedagogical content knowledge and passed this knowledge on to these students who now utilize this thinking in their own teaching.

The participants did follow the pattern of teaching as they were taught. The participants mirrored the teaching practices of their former teachers, particularly if they lacked experience in teaching. Many dance educators may not even be aware that teaching as taught may not be effective. They may follow the logic of “it worked for me, it will work for them,” meaning that they became successful dancers because of the training from their teachers, so if they mimic the behaviors of their former teachers their

students will be successful as well. It is a pattern that continues over time. However, it only takes one ineffective teacher to break this chain of quality dance teaching.

In some instances it is beneficial to mimic the practices of former teachers. If one says he/she trained and/or danced with former ballet master of New York City Ballet George Balanchine, for example, then the school hiring him/her to teach would assume that he/she will share the knowledge gained from Mr. Balanchine with students. In this instance it would behoove the teacher to mimic the teaching practices of Mr. Balanchine. The experience of working with Mr. Balanchine is what made that individual a valuable teacher.

While this practice of teaching as taught does not lead to any innovation in teaching necessarily, it does perpetuate a type of lineage. When the participants were describing their backgrounds, each one mentioned the names of well-known dancers or choreographers. The participants would name their former teachers and then immediately state the company in which the former teacher danced. The dance community values where one trained, so dancers use “names” as a stamp of validity. It is the same for dancers with a degree in dance. Stating one possesses a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from a specific university gives an individual credibility. Different institutions convey different degrees of excellence in dance training. Certain universities, such as Ohio State University, are known for their modern programs. Therefore, earning a degree in dance there would infer that one possesses a strong background in modern dance and choreography. Other institutions specialize in other areas. For example, Brigham Young University is known for an outstanding ballet program, so a graduate from this university would assumingly possess excellent ballet technique.

There is a type of lineage that exists in dance. The places and people with whom one trains are important. Training at the School of American Ballet in New York City is considered much more prestigious than training at a lesser known school in a rural area. It is assumed that the experience and knowledge gained while attending classes at the School of American Ballet is better than that of the lesser known school. This is because the instructors at the School of American Ballet are former principle dancers with companies like the New York City Ballet who are considered to have greater knowledge than someone who trained at a lesser regarded school their whole life and then opened a dance school. Dancers use the places they have studied and the people with whom they have studied as evidence of their qualifications. Without ever demonstrating any dance ability, an individual can say he/she is a company member of the New York City Ballet and one will believe that she is an elite dancer. Likewise modern dancers will say they have trained with well-known choreographers Twyla Tharp or Merce Cunningham to gain credibility. This lineage is comparable to the hierarchy identified by Stinson et al. (1990).

So while training at a certain location or school may not matter in the sense of whether or not an individual actually possesses any ability as a dancer, choreographer, or teacher, it implies that one has been trained in accordance with the reputation of the school or teacher. However, to keep the lineage alive, the alumni of a certain dance school or dance teacher must “back up the hype.” If students from a certain school were inadequate dancers, choreographers, and/or teachers, then the school would begin to lose its prestige and reputation. So the cycle continues. A school or teacher has an impressive status because the former dancers promote that standing. Obviously there will be

exceptions to this rule and some dancers will not gain the knowledge presented. However, for a reputation to continue, the majority of the dance alumni must be successful dancers, choreographers, and teachers. The teacher/student lineage is mutually beneficial. Prestigious dance faculty attract new students who want to study at their school. Successful students increase notoriety, thereby attracting more high-quality students.

In conclusion, this study has found that the type of background and training (i.e. professional dance experience or university degrees) does not directly impact the type of knowledge dance teachers possess, but rather the quality and extent of the training matters. Dance students who have learned from effective dance teachers may successfully mimic those teaching practices. While the type of training and background may not influence a teacher's knowledge base it does influence their teaching focus. This study suggests that dance teachers present material related to their background. Dance teachers with extensive professional dance experience focus on performance qualities while dance teachers with primarily education backgrounds focus on dance theories and dance history. Pedagogical content knowledge in dance teachers is learned through replicating teachers and presents itself in challenging students and varying instructional methods. Age plays a role in dance teachers' instructional choices, but generally dance teachers are instructing by physically demonstrating and verbally instructing. In this study, planning and preparation as well as formal assessments are not a major component of dance faculty members' priorities.

## Strengths

This study was the first to investigate the types of knowledge dance faculty members possess and how those types of knowledge are shaped by their backgrounds and training. Hopefully this study will be a beginning of future research that investigates what types of knowledge and backgrounds are most effective for dance faculty members.

The qualitative nature of this study allowed for in-depth analysis of each participant's beliefs about teaching and teaching practices. This study presented a gender-balanced view of dance faculty. This study also allowed participants to use their own words to construct the meanings of their pedagogy principles. Additionally the participants were observed in their role as a dance educator. Participants were observed in a minimally invasive manner allowing the researcher to observe the participant behaving in as close to "normal" state as possible. The researcher achieved data triangulation by comparing the data in the interviews, observations, and documents to provide credibility to the findings presented.

## Limitations

This study was designed to gain a greater understanding of the types of knowledge dance faculty members from various backgrounds possess and how those types of knowledge materialize in teaching practices; however, as with all research this study has some limitations. The sample size of participants is limited. Many quantitative studies have participant pools in the hundreds or even thousands. The type of data collection employed here would not have been possible with those sample sizes. The nature of qualitative studies, with interviews and observations, does not lend itself to large sample sizes. However, the richness and depth of the information gleaned from

these interviews and observations allowed greater insight into the ways these specific participants discuss their teaching practices and actually teach. The data collected from these four participants reflects this specific conservatory style university dance program and may not represent all dance faculty perspectives.

The data presented here represents the experiences of these four participants at this one university. Certainly faculty members at a different university may have different experiences. The research was designed to represent the experiences of all full-time faculty members at one higher education institution. The institution was chosen due to its well-regarded dance program, proximity to the researcher, and the willingness of the faculty to participate. The intent was to have all participants from a single university to reduce the variables in institutional, departmental restrictions and requirements. At this specific institution the participants reported the only requirement by the university or department was to have a syllabus on file and distributed to the students. Only one participant stated that he would not distribute a syllabus if not required. Other universities may have more or less restrictions or requirements that could impact the faculty members' teaching practices.

All the data for this project was collected during the winter and spring quarters of the same academic year. So the findings represent the thoughts and actions of these participants at this time. Collecting data for a longer length of time or at a different time may lead to different results. The time and finances required to collect data from more participants at additional locations for a longitudinal study were not available for this project.

Another possible limitation of this study is the discrepancy in types of dance being taught. Ideally each participant would have taught the same type of dance (i.e., ballet). Each type of dance has different aesthetics and historically has had varying educational principles. While the basic principles of movement are the same for all dance, ballet and modern, the two genres presented here, carry different approaches to movement. The differences in teaching strategies presented simply by the nature of the dance form may make it difficult to compare teaching across genres. For this reason the findings may not apply to instructors of other types of dance such as tap, jazz dance, ballroom dance, etc.

An additional limitation of this study is the subjective nature of qualitative research. As with all research the researcher entered this project with certain assumptions and biases. The researcher presented the data to the best of her ability in an objective manner with evidence to support her findings. While it may not be possible to replicate the study, it is hoped that another trained researcher would find similar findings if he/she duplicated the study at the same institution with the same participants.

#### Future Research

Despite this study's limitations, it hopefully will continue the dialogue about what types of knowledge are most effective for dance teachers. Certainly this investigation could be expanded to include more participants and various higher education institutions to gain a wider perspective. In addition, methods to systematically observe and identify effective or quality dance lessons are warranted. It may be useful to investigate the differing pedagogical principles across dance styles and genres. Perhaps the engrained structure of certain dance techniques guides and shapes the curriculum impacting the

teaching practices of instructors. A similar study could also be conducted with dance teachers in the private sector. The purpose, focus, and requirements might be different in private studios therefore influencing teaching practices. Additionally the qualifications for teachers in private studios vary. Some private studio instructors are highly trained and competent and others are former students who have inherited the keys to the studio. So their knowledge base varies as well.

Further research could shed light on what types of knowledge we should be focusing on in dance teacher preparation programs. This study suggests that dance teacher preparation courses should spend more time on improving pedagogical principles specifically time management and discipline techniques. It may be beneficial to examine dance faculty members who have graduated from dance teacher preparation programs and investigate the types of knowledge they possess. These results could be compared to dance faculty that have not graduated from a dance teacher preparation program.

Additional research could investigate the role former dance teachers play as influencing factors on dance students' decision to become a dance teacher as well as their teaching practices. It may be interesting to formally investigate if "teaching as taught" is effective. It may also be advantageous to investigate students' opinions and perceptions of the effectiveness of their dance teachers. Ultimately the amount of empirically based research on dance pedagogy is minimal and should be pursued in all areas to contribute to a better understanding of dance education.



## APPENDIX

### Interview Guide

1. Describe your background in dance.
  - a. Academic Degrees
    - Focus
  - b. Professional Dance Experience
  - c. Education/Training
  - d. Teaching Experience
2. Discuss the reasons why you became a teacher at a higher education institution.
3. Discuss your teaching philosophy.
4. In what ways do you develop curriculum or design a dance technique course for the semester?
  - a. Time spent (if not addressed)
  - b. How do you decide what aspects to include?
  - c. How much flexibility is allowed for student needs?
5. In what ways do you prepare daily to teach a dance technique class?
  - a. Time spent (if not addressed)
  - b. How do you decide what to teach each day?
  - c. Do you create lesson plans (formal or informal)?
6. In what ways do you deliver the course content to students?
  - a. Demonstrate movement pattern?
  - b. Verbally communicate how to execute each movement?
  - c. Explain why exercises are done?
7. Discuss the objectives for the technique class (the specific one being observed).
  - a. Daily?
  - b. Semester?
  - c. Assignments, Exams, Expectations (if not evident from course documents)
8. Discuss the ways in which you assess student progress.
  - a. How do you know the students are learning?
  - b. Assessment—daily, weekly, midterm, final, formative, summative
9. What do you find is your most important objective as a teacher?
10. What other responsibilities do you have in addition to teaching at this institution?
  - a. Academically
  - b. Professionally

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