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# You, Me, and We: An Artistic Inquiry Exploring Embodied Self-Awareness

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YOU, ME, AND WE: AN ARTISTIC INQUIRY EXPLORING EMBODIED SELF-  
AWARENESS

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of Columbia College Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Master of Arts

in

Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling

Department of Creative Arts Therapies

August 12, 2017

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## **Abstract**

Heuristic research methodology was used to engage in a creative and systematic process of self-exploration with a goal of fostering embodied self-awareness. I answered the following research question: How will engaging in embodied self-awareness influence and inform the relationships I create with others and myself? Additionally, I explored my use of Effort time and its influence on my embodied self-awareness. As the sole-researcher and participant, data were collected for 4 weeks in 8 sessions by self-reflecting on intuitively felt meaningful experiences between myself and another person(s), in addition to self-reflecting on my individual experience amidst those interactions. Movement narratives, embodied journal entries, and fluctuating my use of Effort time served as data for intuitive analysis. The organic process of analyzing recurring themes and synthesizing information occurred in consultation with a dance/movement therapist and validated with a resonance panel, resulting in 8-10 weeks of analysis. Findings revealed a relationship between authenticity, sense of agency, and embodied self-awareness as well as an increase to the awareness of body sensations. Secondly, fluctuating my use of Effort time supported the practice of embodied self-awareness. Implications suggest practicing embodied self-awareness may prove useful to developing dance/movement therapists for creating and sustaining effective therapeutic relationships. Furthermore, the use of fluctuating Effort time as an intervention may support clients in accessing their own embodied self-awareness.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thank you to each person who played a role in helping me find parts of myself I had forgotten throughout this research process. I have grown that much more as a human being and clinician. I am beyond grateful for each of you.

Thank you to my research team for the endless encouragement and positive reinforcement for my efforts. To my research partner, thank you for answering my late night phone calls and being a beacon of hope. To my research panel, thank you for your sensitivity and acknowledgement of my vulnerability. To my research consultant, I cannot begin to tell you how much your guidance and warm heart have influenced my growth. To my research coordinator/thesis advisor, holy cow you are a rock star. I am blessed to have you on my team.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Within my personal relationships, I have a lingering, unspoken history of feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically disconnected from others. My friends and colleagues could feel my disconnection from them spewing out from my facial cues and body language, which often times led them towards disconnecting from me, assuming I was disinterested. Unbeknownst to them, I internalized shame and guilt while internally screaming to experience intimacy, vulnerability, and openness with them, separate from what I consider to be romantic intimacy involving a sexual partner. I just did not know how. I did not know how to be close to them without fearing I would lose myself or selfishly go unnoticed. I did not know how to maintain balance and support of my own needs, mostly that of emotional safety and self-regulation, within my own self to create balance and support within my relationships. I regularly became emotionally hijacked or flooded, which misguided my interactions with other people, and ultimately disconnected me from myself. I showed others that I was not present with them, which was not my intention. I recall a close friend of many years from Boston, Massachusetts naming my hug, “The Peter Hug,” where both arms stretch around the back of another person quickly ending with a timid, uncomfortable tap on the back before releasing the embrace. Much to my chagrin, she learned to believe that that was who I am and that I may not change even though she desired greater connection from me. I can recall another close friend disclosing she felt I was “superficial,” because I had not been emotionally intimate with her or our friends during times of sharing and vulnerability.

These and many other similar intra and interpersonal experiences in my life took its toll on me. I grew up valuing care, support, love, and honesty, which I had not cultivated in neither my relationship to others I valued so dearly nor with myself. My feelings of disconnect created

relationships that did not feel satisfying, loving, and real. As an emerging clinician and dance/movement therapist, I worried this would negatively impact my ability to create and sustain therapeutic relationships by way of missed connections, misunderstanding, and the potential for devaluing a client's experiences. I wanted to understand how I was experiencing my disconnection. Therefore, I focused my thesis research on non-verbal awareness of my emotional state. I hoped to change my approach to disconnection by learning how to become more self-aware of my body's implicit and explicit experiences, both how I internalized personal experiences and how I expressed myself non-verbally. My research mainly drew inspiration from body awareness but entailed the exploration of both mind and body. I believed that I could cognitively reflect on my body's experience for greater self-knowledge, and I became curious as to how I should notice and what I could be noticing. I wondered to what extent, or to what avail, would noticing be of service to my personal development as a human being and my clinical development as a dance/movement therapist.

### **Mind/Body Connection**

During our graduate education in dance/movement therapy (DMT) and counseling at Columbia College Chicago, my fellow cohort members and I heard the phrase "notice what you notice" rather frequently during our DMT experiential learning activities. We were asked to notice our present moment experience from within our own bodies, not change nor judge it, and verbalize that experience by communicating bodily felt sensations, visual representations seen in our mind's eye, emotions, and word-based thinking, or *SIFT* (Siegel, 2013). *SIFT* (e.g. sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts) (Siegel, 2007; Siegel & Bryson, 2011) is used as a tool when accessing the mind/body connection to foster non-judgmental awareness of the body's sensory and cognitive experience (Siegel, 2012). My understanding was that noticing one's



internal milieu provided the self with knowing, but what remained unclear were what exactly to notice, how to notice, and what meaning I drew. I was unsure if I could consistently notice when my body had a physical response, nor if I would even allow myself to notice, considering how affirmed I was to disconnection.

Noting my professors' professional experiences and expertise with engaging the mind and the body together as one interconnected entity, I learned of the *mind/body connection*. The mind/body connection is the interconnection of mind and body as a single system, where mind and body do not exist separate from one another (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009; Siegel, 2012). Delving into DMT literature and practicing DMT techniques, I came to learn, infer, and validate my mind/body connection as integral for achieving a fuller understanding of myself. Chaiklin & Wengrower (2009) articulated:

Mind is indeed part of the body and the body affects the mind. Much research is now being done by neurophysiologists and other scientists to examine those interrelationships. When speaking of the body, we are not only describing the functional aspects of movement, but how our psyche and emotions are affected by our thinking and how movement itself effects change within them. (p. 5)

I learned that my cognitive process had the capacity to affect my kinesthetic process, and vice-versa. I had not, however, necessarily completely learned why the interconnection of my mind and body had presented itself as disconnection in relationship with other people. I learned that perhaps I was not fully engaged or equipped to engage in a mind/body connection. I inferred that because my cognitive process and kinesthetic process had the capacity to symbiotically exist, that I had the capacity to understand that existence. However, I ultimately did not understand the symbiosis. When I experienced my mind/body connection as thought and feeling coexisting, I

validated the concept of a mind/body connection throughout my education and training. I understood it as knowing there is an interrelationship of mind and body. But, I begged the question, could I be connected mind/body and be conscious of it, especially when trying to foster interpersonal connection?

The mind/body connection is understood by DMT pioneers (Levy, 2005) and used within DMT (Daubenmier et al., 2011) as a foundation to physiological and emotional connectivity (Hackney, 1998). Hackney (1998) was inspired by the concept of the mind/body connection evident in DMT pioneer Irmgard Bartenieff's movement fundamentals, which includes the interplay of one's connection to self and outwardly expression of self (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980). According to Hackney (1998), "the goal of Bartenieff Fundamentals is to facilitate a lively interplay of Inner Connectivity with Outer Expressivity to enrich life" (p. 34). This interplay is undeniably nonlinear and includes both body function and expression (Hackney, 1998). At its core, Hackney (1998) said it is "a willingness to value and actively participate in changing patterns of relationship or patterns of changing relationships...to participate actively in changing patterns of relationship both within myself and in interrelationships between myself and the world...that how I move affects my environment and that my outer environment is in interaction with my inner experience" (p. 37). From a dance/movement therapy perspective, this was my goal and my hope throughout my research study; to foster connection using my body as a primary resource.

### **Embodied Self-Awareness**

Vigorously searching through literature, I came across the term *embodied self-awareness* (ESA), which Fogel (2009) defined as:

The ability to pay attention to ourselves, to feel our sensations, emotions, and movements on-line, in the present moment, without the mediating influence of judgmental thoughts. It is composed of sensations like warm, tingly, soft, nauseated, dizzy; emotions such as happy, sad, threatened; and body senses like feeling the coordination (or lack of coordination) between the arms and legs while swimming, or sensing our shape and size (fat or thin), and sensing our location relative to objects and other people. (p. 311)

ESA cannot be made to happen, but rather, it can be guided to happen (Fogel, 2009). Fogel (2009) further detailed “the more we actively practice creating opportunities for embodied self-awareness to emerge...the more we have the ability to stay longer in the subjective emotional present and the ability to choose to tune into particular sensations in particular parts of the body” (p. 61). ESA involves *interoception*, a person’s ability to sense and feel their own inner sensations as well as feelings related to their internal milieu (Craig, 2004; Daubenmier et al., 2009; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Hindi, 2012; Siegel, 2012) and *body schema*, sensing “...that our body belongs to us and no one else...and the awareness that our body has boundaries that separate us from other objects and bodies” (Fogel, 2009, p. 308). Interoception and body schema involve *self-awareness* (Balestrieri et al., 2011; Farah, 1995; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011), the practice of bringing awareness to the self as a distinct entity separate from another person or the environment (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Chein, 1944; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012). Bringing self-awareness to the body requires being *embodied*, described by Csordas (1993) as “attending with” and “attending to” the body. This resulted in awareness of one’s emotional, intuitive, and physical experiences (Hervey, 2007).

Thus, my focus during the research process was to pay attention to my body’s inner experience knowing that its experience solely belonged to me. I was also to pay attention to how

I could attend to repairing interpersonal connection due to my history of interpersonal disconnection. ESA was said to increase self-awareness in relationship (Fogel, 2009), therefore I engaged in a creative and systematic process of self-exploration and interpersonal connection via fostering ESA. I aimed to develop a greater understanding of my intrapersonal and interpersonal connectedness. My primary research question was, how will engaging in ESA influence and inform the relationships I create with others and myself? As a human being, I wondered if and how ESA would influence and inform the choices I made when entering into and sustaining relationships, as suggested by the literature. As a dance/movement therapist in training, I was curious as to how the practice of ESA would serve as clinically useful within therapeutic relationships.

Literature pertinent to the theory and practice of ESA suggested that slowing down one's physical and/or psychological process may provide an inroad into cultivating ESA (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001; Fogel, 2009). Therefore, I also aimed to access, explore, and harness my use of *Effort time*, as described in Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and understood in DMT as involving "...varying attitudes towards the urgency of an action" (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012, p. 146), including speeding up and slowing down, in order to gain greater self-understanding. *Effort* is the quality of movement related to how someone chooses to move and includes the four *motion factors* of weight, space, time, and flow which are on a continuum between fighting and indulging qualities of movement, such as speeding up (e.g. accelerating) or slowing down (e.g. decelerating) (Moore, 2010). How would honing in on Effort time mixed with a body-based form of self-reflection serve my goal of greater self-knowledge? Coincidentally, during a pilot study, I unexpectedly became explicitly conscious of unattended to and held emotional content by accessing a mind/body connection utilizing ESA and *Effort*

*fluctuation* of the motion factor time. Effort fluctuation is a movement technique marked by a gradual change in movement effort qualities from indulging to fighting (e.g. decelerating time to accelerating time) and vice-versa (Moore, 2010). Moore & Yamamoto (2012) described how “inner attitudes are manifested in moments of fluctuation in focus, pressure, timing, and control” (p. 144). Therefore, my secondary research question was, how will Effort fluctuation of the time motion factor provide an inroad to my embodied self-awareness?

The current, yet, sparse literature surrounding the practice of ESA depicted awareness into one’s kinesthetic consciousness as fundamental to providing the self with knowing (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009). My motivation to explore ESA as a tool in further developing connection is inspired by seeking fulfillment and wholeness as a human being whom coexists with other human beings and to gain greater intrapersonal connection to better engage interpersonally. As a developing dance/movement therapist, I truly aim to further utilize my body as communication to better enter into and sustain clinically effective therapeutic relationships. Fostering ESA was assumed to serve as an inroad to this motivation during this research process.

### **Theoretical Orientation**

This research is informed and influenced by my worldview as a human and clinician seeking intimacy and vulnerability in relationship. ESA was presented as a method of allowing, building, and maintaining intimacy and vulnerability through intra and interpersonal connection. DMT involves a therapeutic relationship between therapist and client in which there is mutual relationship building, including a therapist’s ability to be connected with clients and they themselves (Sandel et al., 1993). My research of ESA is shaped by a Chace approach to DMT, which is grounded in interpersonal connection and empathic reflection via movement and

expressivity (Sandel et al., 1993). My research is further shaped by a counseling framework, called relational-cultural theory (RCT), grounded in using a relational lens to illuminate interpersonal dynamics (Ivey et al., 2012).

### **Chace approach to DMT.**

Marian Chace, a founding pioneer of DMT, worked within psychiatric settings and firmly believed in the healing power of the therapeutic relationship (Sandel et al., 1993). She believed the development, stability, and growth of a therapeutic relationship relied on interpersonal connection (Sandel et al., 1993). Following a Chace approach to DMT demonstrated a growth and progress built from the interpersonal connection between therapist and client, thus fostering a client's ability to claim identity, build trust, further independence, and address social awareness and social integrity (Sandel et al., 1993, p. 83).

Sandel et al. (1993) reflected upon Chace's work within the field of DMT and identified *empathic reflection* as a primary source to approaching Chace's development of a therapeutic relationship (Sandel et al., 1993). "Empathic reflection is the key process by which the dance therapist incorporates clients' spontaneous expressions into the ongoing movement experience and responds to those expressions in an empathic way" (Sandel et al., 1993, p. 98). It depends upon empathy, present moment interactions, spontaneity, intuition, and participation in developing interpersonal connection (Sandel et al., 1993). Practicing empathic reflection leads to mutual empathy and support (Sandel et al., 1993), and ultimately, therapeutic connection. As a developing dance/movement therapist utilizing a Chace approach to DMT, developing clinically effective therapeutic relationships required my use of empathic reflection as a tool in both assessing and intervening (Sandel et al., 1993). My ability to practice empathic reflection felt limited because I chronically lacked authentic intimacy and vulnerability in relationship. I had

been creating therapeutic relationships that felt empathically disconnected at times, and I hoped to be able to re-connect with my clients when that happened. I believed if I was emotionally disconnected from my clients, I did not serve my clients.

Thus, I sought engaging in ESA for increased access to my mind/body connection, feeling inner connectivity/outer expressivity within therapeutic relationships, and effectively and authentically utilizing empathic reflection to enhance the therapeutic process. ESA may prove appropriate for maximizing my level of connection within the therapeutic relationship because it is grounded in empathic reflection, which occurs when the therapist reflects back to the client their most subjective of feelings and internal reactions (Downey, 2016). Utilizing a Chace approach to DMT, I aimed to connect to the internal milieu of my clients by exposing my present moment internal milieu, subjectively and in relation to theirs, with non-judgment and caring support via the therapeutic relationship (Sandel et al., 1993). In order for me to meet that goal, I needed to know how to further connect with myself beyond suppression of my feelings. I also needed to know how to enhance connection within therapeutic relationships when I felt disconnected to others and myself. These connections prove crucially essential for the possibility of a thriving therapeutic relationship.

### **Relational-cultural theory.**

Relational-cultural theory (RCT) is a counseling framework focused on mutual empathy, exploring how connections and disconnections to others affect personal development, and re-connecting or transforming disconnections (Cannon et al., 2008; Ivey et al., 2012; Jordan, 2010). RCT fosters vulnerability to relational issues in preparing a person to develop greater flexibility in differentiating how they relate to themselves, others, and the world around them in order to foster relational confidence (Ivey et al., 2012; Jordan, 2010). My relational issues involved lack

of confidence in authentic expression of my feelings and were superficial in nature. This caused ill-serving disconnection that rigidly limited my growth personally and professionally. The issues seemed so innate and so patterned. RCT attends to past patterns of relationship and how to transform disconnection in present and future relationships (Cannon et al., 2008; Jordan, 2010), thus proving appropriate for my hope of fostering change within myself. Furthermore, mutual empathy and growth-fostering relationships are key RCT concepts that emphasize empowerment, acceptance, authenticity, mutuality, relational competency, and connection to deepen the therapeutic relationship (Cannon et al., 2008; Ivey et al., 2012; Jordan, 2010), thus proving appropriate for my hope of fostering clinically effective therapeutic relationships.

Theoretically, RCT involves movement due to its nature in fulfilling a need to connect and changing patterns of relationship. Therefore, I found that each theoretical standpoint beautifully aligned with how I cared to further develop psychologically, emotionally, socially, and professionally. The relationship between my goals as a clinician and dance/movement therapist, ESA, RCT, and a Chace approach to DMT encapsulates fostering connection in relationship with movement.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This literature review examines research that defines embodied self-awareness, explains how it is developed and re-established, and outlines the physiological, psychological, cultural, and spiritual benefits. Current literature supported the notion that ESA is vital to a person's health (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). ESA is seen as reflective, cathartic, and self-regulating (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011; Pagis, 2009) It considers a mind/body connection, which is a foundational concept in DMT (Nemetz, 2006). Kriyananda (2002) depicted the mind/body connection within Indian yoga practice as a method of releasing tension held within the mind and the body. Nemetz (2006) noted how dance/movement therapists emulate the transcendence of the body, much like yoga, as a means of guiding present moment connection intra and interpersonally. Schmais (1974, p. 7) indicated how DMT "...has roots that extend back to ancient times in dances of celebrations and crises, in dances that define individual and group identity..." illustrating the dynamism of supportive and empathically connected relationships with self and other, prominent in the practice of ESA (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009).

### **Defining ESA**

To understand ESA, it is important to first understand embodiment and self-awareness individually. Embodiment employs a mind/body connection, which allows an individual to sense and create self-understanding based on bodily information such as sensations, thoughts, and feelings (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Hafner, 2013; Hervey, 2007; Siegel, 2012). In order for an individual to experience embodiment, Csordas (1993) explained that paying

attention to one's body results in an awareness of movement that encapsulates not only sensing the skeletal/muscular body move in relationship to the environment, but also sensing inner emotions, intuition, and flow of energy; like that of the interaction between interoception and body schema described by Fogel (2009). Similarly, Bailey & Leigh (2013) suggested that there must be an on-going process of being with and learning from the body when embodied. Knowing oneself as a distinct entity separate from another person or the environment is self-awareness (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Chein, 1944; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012). Simply noticing one's own thoughts, sensations, and feelings can be an inroad to self-awareness (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). Human beings have the capability of distinguishing themselves from external stimuli, therefore illustrating self-awareness (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Chein, 1944; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009).

Fogel (2009) deepened the understanding of embodiment from not only bringing awareness to perceiving our own movements when in relation to self, others, and/or the environment, but also learning from them. He discussed learning to understand one's movement, from both the sensations occurring within the body (e.g. warm, tingly, in pain, etc.) as well as the emotions that attach to these sensations, by defining them conceptually via *conceptual self-awareness* (CSA) (Fogel, 2009). Based in thought, reason, logic, and understanding, CSA is "what I think about myself in the realm of concepts that...may not be directly connected to feelings from the body" (Fogel, 2009, p. 309). In drawing meaning, language and thought are notoriously used to describe what is being felt, moving away from ESA towards CSA (Fogel, 2009). Fogel (2009) explained that "...we cannot be in conceptual and embodied states of self-awareness at the same time" (p. 99) due to how the brain's neural network activates and shifts. We can, however, have the capacity to self-regulate between the two states, promoting

exceptional decision-making for personal health and well-being (Fogel, 2009). He used an example of experiencing knee pain to illustrate how we can choose how to experience ourselves (i.e. ESA), cast judgment on our experience (i.e. CSA), and utilize both instances for further decision-making (Fogel, 2009). We do this by following a systematic self-examination rubric:

- 1) Bring awareness to the knee pain with ESA (i.e. “my knee hurts”).
- 2) Self-examine the intensity of the pain (i.e. “my knee really hurts” or “my knee hurts a little”).
- 3) Allow thought of whether the pain is significant or not with CSA based off the self-examination (i.e. “I need to call for help because I will not be able to walk like last time” or “I need to rest before I start walking again because it might be okay”).
- 4) Verify or invalidate created thoughts by checking back in with ESA (i.e. “let me take a moment to see if I really feel this much pain or if I am making a big deal out of it”).
- 5) Re-assess pain threshold and tolerance to make an informed decision that is self-regulated (i.e. “I am actually fine and can keep walking” or “I am actually not fine and should stop walking”). (Fogel, 2009, p. 95-101)

We can also promote healthy decision-making that is provoked from thought by asking ourselves to proactively recuperate, thereby re-connecting to ESA and providing ourselves with additional inroads to self-examination (Fogel, 2009).

### **ESA, Interoception, and Body Schema**

Fogel (2009) suggested that ESA involves conscious awareness in the midst of an experience (Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). ESA involves awareness to how one’s own body senses and acts as an inroad to understanding one’s emotions (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Fogel, 2009). Fogel (2009) explained that feelings are sensations and emotions

reflect meaning-making processes of those bodily sensations. The interaction of sensing and triggering emotion then influences behavior (Fogel, 2009). Illumination of how one might handle oneself results from an understanding that feelings are sensations that have been given worth via categorical emotions (i.e. anger, fear, sadness, joy, etc.) (Fogel, 2009).

According to Fogel (2009), ESA is grounded in present moment integration of interoception, or the ability to sense and feel one's inner state and emotions, and body schema, or the awareness of one's own self in the world. Critchley & Garfinkel (2013) elaborated further by addressing interoceptive awareness (e.g. I feel tingly) and interoceptive sensitivity (e.g. I feel incredibly tingly or I feel a little bit tingly). They proposed the addition of the sensitivity component to address individualistic susceptibility when feeling bodily sensations (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013). Concurrently, Critchley & Garfinkel (2013) considered the role of emotional sensitivity and asserted that emotions could feel more powerful to those who are more sensitive to their bodily arousal state. This reflected how interoceptive sensitivity greatly impacted emotional response (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013). If one could identify aspects of their experience utilizing a method like ESA, one could more fully process an experience and create new meaning from that experience by being open to feeling and sensation (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011; Hafner, 2013). Openness in this way is beneficial for understanding one's lived experience (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011; Hafner, 2013).

### **Developing ESA**

Researchers have interpreted embodied self-awareness as an individual's recognition of awareness to their own felt bodily sensations (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Hafner, 2013; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). ESA is embedded in embodied practices, such as

somatic awareness, the Feldenkrais method, and DMT (Bakal, Coll, & Schaefer, 2008; Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). These practices involve bringing conscious awareness to sensorimotor and emotional states by moving from implicit to explicit knowing (Bakal, Coll, & Schaefer, 2008; Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011).

Kinesthetically sensing oneself and becoming aware of one's bodily sensations can lead to an explicit, embodied consciousness of the self during interaction, both interpersonally and within different environments (Bailey & Leigh, 2013). Our interaction with the world is influenced by ESA as we create thought and action from our bodily sensations and internal states, which are linked with experience (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Hafner 2013).

ESA develops significantly from interactions one has with the world, that which are interpersonal in nature (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). As mentioned in the previous sections of this literature review, awareness of interoception and body schema are the initial steps in the transition into ESA (Fogel, 2009). Any awareness one has becomes embodied as soon as the implicit physiological or psychological experiences transition to an explicit experience of conscious awareness (Bailey & Leigh, 2013). Experiences taking place in the here-and-now are the most influential and beneficial moments one can utilize towards developing and increasing their embodied self-awareness (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009).

**Eight basic principles.** Fogel (2009) recommended basic principles for therapists to treat a client's lost connection to ESA. These principles include (a) resourcing, (b) slowing down, (c) coregulation, (d) verbalization, (e) links and boundaries, (f) self-regulation, (g) reengagement, and (h) letting go. Fogel (2009) described the following:

1. “Resources are a constant and reliable presence in the body, mental imagery, or surroundings that feels safe stable, and supportive. People need resources as they reexperience the feelings of threat, anger, or pain that led to the suppression of embodied self-awareness.”
2. “Encourage shifting from thinking to feeling by starting with what the person can already feel in their bodies and develop a sense of competence to experience these, to expand their tolerance for more embodied self-awareness, and to come back to resources for safety when needed.”
3. Monitoring autonomic arousal and relaxation and helping the person to maintain homeostasis by shifting intensity, speeding up or slowing down, helping the person to come back to resources when needed; pointing out when the person leaves or comes back to the subjective emotional present.”
4. “Helping the person to find words to describe their experience, encouraging communication about experience without losing contact with embodied self-awareness.”
5. “Locating sources of sensation in the body, opening defensive or immobilized postures, finding and feeling ‘lost’ body areas (feet and legs, pelvis, the back) coordination of movements, finding links and boundaries between self and others, feeling, moving.”
6. “Becoming one’s own resource by being proactive in finding needed resources, asking for and arranging for guidance, healing, and soothing from things and people (warm baths, massages, soft clothing, etc.).”
7. “Ability to remain in the subjective emotional present of embodied self-awareness while experiencing the world with empowerment, triumph, and assertiveness. Using

awareness to make choices about well-being such as to leave unwanted situations, to say ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ to slow down, or to rest. Growing empathy for others and ability to be in touch with others while staying in one’s own subjective emotional present.”

8. “Only after the previous steps have been achieved can one ‘let go’ without losing embodied self-awareness. Letting go includes being able to ‘step off the treadmill’ of life to take care of yourself, the acceptance of your limits, a sense of compassion for others, and the ability to let yourself get lost in pleasurable creativity and self-discovery.” (p. 23-24).

Each principle works together in bringing awareness to one’s body schema and bodily sensations in the moment, essentially connecting an individual to embodied self-awareness (Fogel, 2009).

**Additional techniques.** Increasing one’s ESA can be taught (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). It focuses on real-time conscious awareness for enlightenment regarding how one interacts with the world (Bakal, Coll, & Schaefer, 2008; Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). Movement practices that address and increase ESA include yoga (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Pagis, 2009), martial arts (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Pagis, 2009), Tai Chi (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009), meditation (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Fogel, 2009; Pagis, 2009), mindfulness (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Pagis, 2009; Siegel, 2012), authentic movement (Bailey & Leigh, 2013), exercise (Fogel, 2009), massage (Fogel, 2009), and dance (Fogel, 2009; Pagis, 2009). Additionally, Buchanan & Ulrich (2001) explained a Feldenkrais movement exercise called “Awareness through Movement,” where body movements are slowed down to enter into ESA. Specific to authentic movement, Nemetz (2006) noted how Whitehouse (1979) utilized the improvisational process of authentic movement as a means to enter into deep levels of the

unconscious. ESA presents itself as a requirement for practicing authentic movement because there need be some level of attention to ESA to engage in the improvisational process of authentic movement.

Daubenmier et al. (2011) discussed having awareness to one's breath connection as another technique for developing ESA. Breath connectivity is affected by our experiences as well as our thoughts and feelings (e.g. slowed versus fast breathing when anxious), thus one's conscious awareness to their breath increases ESA (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Hackney, 1998). Hackney (1998) described a belief that is held across many cultures in that noticing one's breath connection provides grounding and spiritual connection to the universe. Furthermore, Hackney (1998) described that attending to one's breath connection promoted a sense of presence and ease during situations that may seem fearful, anxiety provoking, or frustrating. The mind/body connection can be healed by direct connection to functional breathing (Fogel, 2009).

**Current challenges facing efficient development.** The amount of literature specifically addressing challenges when developing ESA is scarce. Fogel (2009) discussed how modern society's struggling education system, ever-growing technological advancements, and fast-paced lifestyle suppress people's ability to feel their bodies. A fast-paced lifestyle with fewer and fewer opportunities to attend to one's body does not allow for efficient development of embodied self-awareness, which needs time and repetition (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). This lifestyle causes self-avoidance when exploring one's sensations and emotions (Fogel, 2009). Bartenieff & Lewis (1980) discussed that a person connects their body to the world via "inner impulses to move" (p. 51). Moving from an inner impulse evokes ESA (Fogel, 2009). Sociocultural demands in today's fast-paced society risks suppression of feeling and emotion of one's inner impulse to move (e.g. perhaps taking a break every few hours when tired, allowing school children to fidget



in their seats or get up and move when restless, etc.) (Bartenieff & Lewis, 1980; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). Bailey & Leigh (2013) suggested that education in and opportunity for engaging in movement practice would combat underdeveloped ESA.

Body schema impairment may also pose a challenge when developing ESA (Fogel, 2009). An individual's physiological or physical awareness of their body may be distorted or impaired, perhaps influencing their engagement with the world (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). Judgment may be placed onto one's body schema whereas ESA calls for non-judgmental, conscious awareness (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). Siegel (2012) also believed in non-judgmental attention to present moment experience in order to foster greater emotional self-regulation. Frequent self-judgment may risk underdevelopment of ESA, thereby decreasing a person's self-regulation capacity (Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012). Chaiklin & Wengrower (2009) described how DMT and the therapeutic alliance, which is based on mutual trust and respect between therapist and client, is founded on complete acceptance of the individual and leaves no room for judgment.

### **Benefits of ESA**

Re-establishing one's own ESA can provide change when shaping our world by way of re-developing and/or increasing empathic concern for others (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Fogel, 2009), decreasing self-rumination of life experiences (Bailey & Leigh, 2013), fostering insight (Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009), fostering self-reflection (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Fogel, 2009), promoting self-care (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012), promoting emotional self-regulation (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012) and enhancing physical well-being (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009). ESA aids with identification and conscious awareness of one's feelings,

gaining awareness of one's physiological and psychological response patterns in relation to these feelings (e.g. overeating when anxious, feeling depressed when lonely, etc.) and gaining insight into potential reasoning for one's behavior (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009; Pagis, 2009; Siegel, 2012). These in turn offer opportunity for efficient self-care and self-regulation (Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2011). Engaging in embodied self-awareness provides the potential for someone to witness their experience more fully and perhaps make a choice to change how they interact with the world more frequently (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Hafner, 2013).

ESA is a choice (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011). Fogel (2009) discussed that if someone is willing to experience ESA, that individual is connecting to his or her "True Self" (p. 103). Fogel (2009) mentioned an understanding of the True Self as discussed by Winnicott (1960). Winnicott (1960) argued the True Self as the "core of the personality...said to be the inherited potential which is experiencing a continuity of being, and acquiring in its own way and at its own speed a personal psychic reality and a personal body scheme" (p. 591). Fogel (2009) based the True Self "...in the 'reality' and 'truth' of our sensations and emotions in the subjective emotional present" (p. 103). If a person can become aware of their feelings and make choices in support of those feelings, a person can further their emotional integration of the True Self (Fogel, 2009; Winnicott, 1960).

ESA provides a plethora of health benefits (e.g. pain management, mood regulation, decreasing anxiety and panic attacks, relaxation, movement efficiency, treating obesity) by bringing conscious awareness to how one self-manages (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Fogel 2011). Daubenmier et al. (2011) found that patients

reported quicker recovery and greater emotional regulation from unpleasant experiences of pain by allowing themselves to let go of stressful situations and subsequently adapting to these situations. Patients practiced body awareness amongst embodied methods like yoga therapy, Tai Chi, and somatic therapy and attended focus groups discussing their experience (Daubenmier et al., 2011). One patient described that awareness of sensations allowed for new perspective on how to respond to and relate with pain, while another patient felt less self-judgmental which decreased stress (Daubenmier et al., 2011).

ESA can play a significant role in developing healthy interpersonal relationships and increasing empathic concern for others (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009). Emotional tolerance limits a person's avoidance of emotions, greatly improving their ability to take ownership of their true feelings (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009). This can lead to stronger communication and mutual understanding in relationships (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009). Additionally, ESA can impact the parent-child relationship (Fogel, 2009; Tortora, 2006). Tortora (2006) described how kinesthetic attunement builds a healthy relationship and secure-attachment between parent and child (Tortora, 2006). Tortora (2006) explained how the parent better meets the needs of the child by actively staying present with their interaction. ESA is needed in order for this to happen. Engaging in ESA while interacting with another person results in attunement and empathy building (Fogel, 2009; Tortora, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

ESA can lead to self-understanding, create opportunity for self-reflection, help a person develop a healthy emotional lifestyle, and strengthen one's empathic concern for others.

Struggling with my own cathartic release of emotions, my literature review process was motivated by strengthening my ESA and creating a new relationship with myself. I hoped to make connections between ESA and the role DMT might have played. Would increasing a person's utilization of ESA in DMT create greater susceptibility for personal growth, understanding, and change? Moreover, would effort modulation in Laban's time, weight, space, and flow effort qualities provide an inroad to increasing ESA? As a dance/movement therapist in training, I wondered how an embodied practice might influence my therapeutic relationships. Would practicing ESA as a mental health provider increase ethical practice in a clinical setting? On a more personal level, I wondered how might it influence the relationships I have with others and myself. My assumption was that by increasing my practice of ESA, I would build greater empathic concern for others and strengthen my ethical sensitivity. These questions and assumptions guided my process exploring ESA.

The following criteria regarding ESA were beyond the scope of this literature review: the role of primary versus categorical emotions, the role of memory, arousal versus appraisal of emotional states, correlations between intuition and embodied self-awareness, and the neuroscience of embodied self-awareness.

## **Chapter Three: Methods**

### **Methodology**

Aligning with my values of creativity, self-reflection, and humanism as an emerging clinician and researcher, embodied artistic inquiry is an arts-based research method that relies on art as knowing, to deepen a research process (Hervey, 2000). Embodied artistic inquiry involves art as data collection/analysis/presentation of findings, engagement in a creative process, aesthetically inspired, and drawing upon embodied experiences (Hervey, 2000). I believe art making and the creative process invite imagination, and I have come to understand imagination as necessary for both personal growth and interaction with my reality.

Pragmatism was the worldview used to understand the application of embodied artistic inquiry. A pragmatic lens constitutes: a desire to gain knowledge as a means to an outcome, multiple and appropriate use of methods, personal choice, inter-subjectivity, single and multiple realities, effectiveness, practical implications, and finding personal value in my results (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2010). Early pragmatists “emphasized the importance of common sense and practical thinking” (Mertens, 2010, p. 36). As a pragmatist, I was interested how ESA would inform me and what I would do with newfound awareness in my interactions with the world and the relationship I had with myself.

### **Participants**

I am 31 years old, live in Chicago, Illinois, and identify as Hispanic and cis male. I attended Columbia College Chicago to study DMT and counseling. I made specific design choices (e.g. data collection in private home studio space) that provided safety, privacy, and acceptance of vulnerability, so that I could invite openness to self-reflection. This sometimes included having dim lighting or burning incense.

Moreover, as the researcher and sole participant, my role was to provide myself with compassion, time, and space to recuperate from delving into what I had thought could be, and at times were, highly emotional recapitulations of significant experiences. I wanted to maintain a sense of safety to better enter into my inner experience; therefore, I aimed to allow for physical, mental, and/or emotional recuperation during data collection and analysis, making sure to later reflect on why I felt I needed said recuperation (i.e. fatigue, avoidance, etc.). A decision to recuperate was beneficial for me in those moments, because I would then feel ready, willing, and able to continue my process.

Acknowledging my autonomy, doing no harm, and treating myself fairly throughout the research process upheld core ethical principles, such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. I ensured my own safety by upholding my values of forthrightness and honesty when sharing my findings. Expressing and evaluating my emotional content proved overwhelming at times as approaching a deeper level of self-reflection required intimacy and vulnerability. Therefore, engagement in my own private therapy concurrent with the data collection and data analysis timeline occurred so that I would engage in necessary self-care. As a developing clinician, it was important to me that I engaged in self-care, specifically during this inquiry, because I had been concurrently working with clients at my clinical internship. Ethically, I am responsible for fostering self-care within my life to ensure I can maintain emotional safety when working with clients. During this process of data collection and analysis, my self-care involved individual DMT and counseling every other week, exercise, family phone calls, dance, and music. I felt those self-care activities empowered me in ways that felt genuine to my aesthetic and emotional safety. I did not become emotionally and/or psychologically compromised or severely dysregulated, which I attribute to actively engaging in self-care.

## **Data Collection & Analysis**

Due to the nature of my research methodology and design, data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously. My research design was initially thought to begin with a systematic collection of data throughout a specified time period, and then an analysis of all data collected would follow. However, when carrying out the design, I quickly became aware of how that process would not serve my research of ESA, specifically the interaction of present moment experiences, consciousness, sensations, and emotions. I chose to analyze data as needed, including throughout data collection and amidst validation strategies, as well as systematically (e.g. at the end of each week of data collection), resulting in 8-10 weeks worth of organic analysis.

**Creative synthesis and intuitive inquiry.** Using Hervey's (2000) conceptualization of Moustakas' creative synthesis data collection and analysis method during my collection and analysis process supported my desire for an intuitive, self-directed, and grounded methodology. The intuitive inquiry aimed to reveal how fostering ESA proved meaningful to my True Self and identity as developing clinician (Curry & Wells, 2006). I identified emerging themes most salient within collected data. Self-reflection occurred consistently, thus themes suddenly emerged. Artwork via photos were used for synthesizing and analyzing consistent themes within my data collection methods; the photo content being that of a reflection of my data (Hervey, 2000).

My research design relied on collecting data within a given week from personal movement narratives, writings, and art making via photos. The data included my most current recollected memories involving significant interactions both between myself and another person(s) and my own personal internal experience amongst the interactions. One significant interaction involved greatly limiting my physical and emotional vulnerability from a close friend

in need of comfort. I was very conscious of my behavior and wished to change it, but did not. Self-reflective journal entries in conjunction with created movement narratives occurred twice per week for a four week data collection period. The primary goal of each entry assumed self-reflection of thoughts, feelings, and sensations of the aforementioned experiences I chose as significant. Entries were written utilizing embodied writing, a qualitative research tool demonstrating body-centered self-reflection, in the hopes of gaining greater understanding of my intrapersonal connection to the reflected-upon experience (Anderson, 2001). Movement narratives were filmed and observed to track my use of Effort time; then, I re-visited created movement while engaging in Effort time fluctuation. Ending each week of data collection, art making via photo captures were taken in the hopes of synthesizing the data.

**Phase I: Authentic movement.** During each of the eight data collection sessions, I began a movement process by creating an improvisational movement narrative whilst reflecting on an intuitively felt meaningful experience between another person(s) and myself. I specifically chose experiences that seemed to occupy my thoughts, impact my mood, or raise concern for me in some way for a significant period of time. An example of a meaningful experience, for me, was when I would cry. My own level of self-awareness tells me that I less frequently attend to feelings of sadness that I typically attribute to crying.

I believed the intuitive aspect of my decision-making process when identifying meaningful experiences would embrace an organic, self-reflective entry into my present moment experience. I assumed the experiences chosen for self-reflection meant something to me, so I embodied each of those recollections utilizing part of (e.g. no use of witness) Whitehouse's process of authentic movement (see Appendix A) (Levy, 2005). Authentic movement is a practice and intervention technique in DMT, involving a mover and witness, used to externally



represent internal sensory/emotional experiences (e.g. “inner impulses”) (Levy, 2005).

Whitehouse (1979) described it as “surrender that cannot be explained, repeated exactly, sought for or tried out” (p. 57), much like that of ESA (Fogel, 2009). As it relates to DMT, embodied self-awareness has been described as a tool used in models such as authentic movement (Bailey & Leigh, 2013). I would locomote, gesture, take on postures, tap, bounce, sway, clench, widen, vibrate, extend, and descend in my private studio space until an organic movement phrase or small combination of phrases developed. I ceased movement when my movement narrative, comprised of one movement phrase or a combination thereof, felt complete. I knew movement narratives felt complete, because I felt honest and confident I attended to all the internal sensory stimulation presenting itself to me. This process of creating movement took anywhere from 15-30 minutes, resulting in movement narratives of 30 seconds to my longest lasting approximately two minutes. Following this process of creation, I filmed my movement narrative and set the recording aside for later use.

At times, I found myself wishing to (and once succeeding at) ending my creative process early, because I became too tired, too disconnected from my senses, or flat out resistant to the emotional content surfacing in the moment (i.e. shame, judgment, ridicule, anger). To combat those experiences of disconnect, I found myself taking a recuperative 30-second to a minute break to be disconnected by focusing my attention on something else. Drinking water, taking deep breaths, and sitting down to either look out the window or smell my burning incense, served as recuperation for me during those moments and reconnected me to my practice of ESA. I felt more grounded, calm, and self-regulated. After recuperation, I would repeat the movement already generated and continue with improvisation to finish the movement narrative. The one instance of ending my movement experience early resulted in a shorter movement narrative (i.e.

roughly 30 seconds), because of my resistance of surfacing emotional content. Some movement narratives were longer in duration (i.e. 1-2 minutes) and I believe this was a result of incorporating recuperative pauses. I believe allowing myself extra time to continue, resulted in an increased opportunity to explore.

**Phase II: Embodied writing, part I.** After the movement narrative was filmed, I immediately created a self-reflective journal entry utilizing embodied writing, in reflection of and in response to the movement narrative. My goals were to access implicitly felt bodily experiences and take note of them (e.g. deep breaths, held breaths, tingles, warmth, coldness, rapid heart beating, perspiration, tears forming, micro movements) without casting judgment. I also took note of how they made me feel (e.g. happy, ashamed, sad, angry, scared). Prior to engaging in the research process, I worried that succinct or accurate written reflection of my then internal experience would not occur. As it turns out, my feelings of worry were inconsequential, because during this phase of embodied writing, I was actually taking note of my in-the-moment experience in reflection of my experience, not the reverse. I believe I honored my present emotional experience as well as my then experience through self-reflection.

**Phase III: Movement observation & effort fluctuation.** Following each written entry, I revisited my initial movement narrative by watching the video recording from the current session. In this movement observation phase, I noted my use of Effort time on a movement assessment coding sheet (see Appendix B). The focus of my observation pertained to my secondary research question of gaining insight into how Effort fluctuation of Effort time provided an inroad to my ESA. The hope was that my movement observations would objectively focus on how my body experienced my lived experiences. I hoped for further awareness of my personal movement qualities (e.g. my preferences towards Effort time). After movement

observation, I re-embodied the current movement narrative while fluctuating my use of Effort time. From that, a second movement narrative was created that lasted anywhere from 30 seconds to several minutes.

**Phase IV: Embodied writing, part II.** Similar to phase two of my data collection process, I created another journal entry utilizing embodied writing in response to the second movement narrative generated in phase three. I harbored the same goals as the initial embodied writing and took note of how I understood the change in my movement experience. If any new awareness arose, if sensations were felt on a deeper level or not, and how deceleration revealed its influence during self-reflection. My use of deceleration was given additional attention since the theory of ESA suggested that slowing down a psychological or physical process provides an inroad into it.

**Phase V: Photo captures.** Finally, at the end of each week of data collection, I developed a multitude of photos that were in response to my primary research question. I selected two photos from the collection I felt strongly depicted my insights from that week regarding how I create relationships with others and myself. Re-reading each week's compilation of pre and post embodied writing journal entries began this process. When creating the design of my artistic inquiry, I considered incorporating the created movement responses from phase one and/or three in this recapitulation of collected information. However, I found myself able to re-connect to each week's emotional content solely through my embodied writings. After re-reading entries, I took long walks in my community, on the lakefront, and across Chicago with the intention of noticing the world around me. If I felt connected to my surroundings, and the connection felt as though it honored my experience with the week's revelations of my emotional, sensory, and psychological state, I took a photo of something that seemed to represent that

connection. This resulted in a total of 8 selected photos from a mass collection by the end of my data collection process.

**Phase VI: Enacting validation strategies.** Two validation strategies included utilizing an external consultant and a resonance panel. My research consultant, who is a dance/movement therapist, played a role in defining and corroborating themes/patterns within my journal entries and movement observations, identifying other possible themes/patterns, and providing objective identification of biases and assumptions within collected data. My consultant and I met once a week for four weeks in a private office space following my four week data collection period. Our consultations lasted one hour each session. We integrated all of my data, including any analysis that may have organically surfaced during data collection, into our discussions. Moreover, I could re-visit generated movement from data collection at any time during consult, assuming that would have provided further opportunity for corroboration of themes, illuminating and identifying biases or assumptions, and/or introducing new themes or patterns. This did not take place, however, because it was not needed during our sessions. What did take place was reading aloud some of my journal entries so that my consultant could witness how I was externalizing internal stimuli. She observed my movement as I read my entries and was encouraged to relate with my sharing of embodied writings by voicing her observations and associated feelings/assumptions in the hopes of providing further opportunity for insight into my data. She also guided me in facing some of the deeper levels of emotional content that surfaced in our consultations by way of movement, self-awareness, and self-reflection.

Two weeks following my four-week long period with my research consultant, I enlisted a resonance panel consisting of three dance/movement therapists whom knew me intimately and were familiar with my research topic. We met once for 90 minutes and each panelist was invited

to dialogue about my creative process and provide feedback collectively. Panelists did not have the opportunity to embody my consistently recurring themes, so that I could potentially gain deeper understanding and validity of synthesized findings, as well as identification of error and bias (Curry & Wells, 2006). However, similar to the consultant, panelists were able to observe me and voice their observations, associated feelings/assumptions, and thematic curiosities as I read aloud one journal entry from collected data. By the end of our panel meeting together, I had a plethora of suggestions and validations that helped guide my understanding of how ESA may or may not have influenced my relationships to others and myself. The panel also provided similar feedback on how Effort fluctuation of the motion factor time may or may not have provided an inroad to ESA.

### **Deviation from the Procedure**

As it turned out, I felt that my artwork via photos chosen during phase five were not relative to my movement narratives and embodied writing responses, resulting in a need for omission from the procedure. I hoped to externally represent my inner felt experience within the photography medium as if it were an extension of the embodiment medium. I assumed that when I looked at my still shots, I would feel as emotionally connected (i.e. I would feel the same sensations, honor the same emotion, or have some form of associated response) to the visual content as I would the kinesthetic content. At the end of each week of data collection, I found myself taking photos of random scenery or things that only slightly felt representative of my data. The photos did not feel authentic to my experience. Therefore, I omitted analysis and synthesis of captured photos from my procedure. My research consultant validated my experience of not feeling tied to my collection of photos and agreed that if I felt they did not fit into the analysis process, that I omit them. I believe the photos served as a form of unexpected

self-care. They were imaginative extensions of my emotional state that were externally represented on a piece of photo paper, but the photos did not resonate with me and were not indicative of relative data for analysis of my research question.

## Chapter Four: Results

Engaging in a process of fostering ESA was intended to reveal how its applied use as a tool would influence and inform my sense of intrapersonal and interpersonal connection. As a developing dance/movement therapist, I wanted to enhance my ability to utilize my body as communication to better enter and sustain clinically effective therapeutic relationships. Fostering ESA was assumed to serve as an inroad to that desire as well. When enacting my data collection, I focused on my body's sensory experience in the hopes of developing newfound, conscious self-awareness regarding how my body was responding to and experiencing my interpersonal relationships. I also set out to understand the role of Effort time fluctuation in fostering ESA. The following were my primary and secondary research questions: How will engaging in embodied self-awareness influence and inform the relationships I create with others and myself? How will Effort fluctuation of the time motion factor provide an inroad to my embodied self-awareness?

Both questions were answered by my results, which are identified thematically via four main themes including:

- The relationship between sensations and emotions.
- The relationship between sensations, emotions, and environment.
- The relationship between sensations, emotions, and use of Effort time fluctuation.
- The role of *Effort flow*.

Effort flow is described in LMA as involving "...varying attitudes towards the precision and control with which a motion is performed...actions done with bound flow appear controlled, restrained, careful, taut, and precise...motions performed with free flow appear abandoned, fluent, easygoing, loose, and unrestricted" (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012, p. 147). During data

analysis, I noted all of these themes embedded within embodied journal entries and movement experiences, both privately and in session with my research consultant.

## Themes

**Sensation and emotion.** As shown in Figures 1 and 2 (see below), I experienced a multitude of sensations and emotions. I noted each sensation and emotion individually to demonstrate the wide span of my results collected during my data collection/analysis process.

Silent	Slow	Cold	Shallow	Energized
Quieting	Quick	Cooling	Weighted	Hollowing Out
Loud	Numb	Warm(th)	Anchored	Narrowing/Collapsing/Sinking
Heart Beating	Gurgling	Vibrating	Flooding	Expanding/Extending/Rising
Whooshing	Bound	Shudder	Queasy	Tension-Constriction
Pulsing	Flowing	Tingling	Swallowing	Tension-Release

*Figure 1.* A list of felt sensations.

Sadness	Happiness/Joyful	Excitement
Love	Avoidant	Frustration
Shame	Hope	Empathic
Depressed	Relief	Judgmental
Helplessness/Hopelessness	Intimate	Fear
Ambivalent/Doubt	Anticipatory	Annoyed
Nervous/Anxious	Acceptance	Protective
Anger	Guilt	Vulnerable
Healthy	Overwhelmed	Isolated
Withdrawn	Strong	Pity

*Figure 2.* A list of appraised emotions.

Single or multiple felt sensations led to the experience of single, dual, or multiple emotional responses. Some excerpts from my embodied journal entries that demonstrated this idea read: “my stomach gurgles when I think about love,” “the cold tear falling down my face in a slow, turtled way starts to feel like nothing,” and “it is a bit hard to breathe as my body is quieting. I am beginning to feel avoidant.” One journal read, “My stomach whooshes. My face smiles as my mouth extends across my face. My eyebrows raise and expand. My body widens



and expands like it's been waiting forever.” In this moment alone, when I brought my attention to that experience of sensation and emotion during my process with ESA, I saw that so much could happen in an instance. I had the capacity of subconsciously, or implicitly, experiencing many emotions. My stomach whooshing had felt happy and loved, my face smiling felt ambivalent, and my eyebrows raising felt doubt. When my body expanded, I felt a longing, “...like it's been waiting.”

Moreover, my emotions would also impact my sensory experience. One piece of data demonstrating that idea read, “As I sensed my body, I felt an incredible sense of vulnerability and sadness...I went into shut down mode...my stomach felt cold all of a sudden and that is all I could really feel.” In that moment, I was feeling vulnerable and sad leading to felt sensations of silence and coldness. All of the abovementioned experiences between sensations and emotions illuminated how interactive the two could be during any given moment and how much of my interactions with others as well as how I was experiencing myself had become fiercely internalized, ignored, or unconscious.

Deepening those findings, I noted my felt sensations that impacted my emotions, and emotions that impacted felt sensations, shown collectively in Figure 3 (see below). Results showed that I had the capacity to experience specific emotions generated because of my body's sensations and, similarly, that I could experience specific sensations generated from my emotions. Moreover, these interactions of sensation and emotion may have more than one meaning. For example, if I felt a shudder, I had the capacity to experience any of the following emotions or combination thereof: annoyance, frustration, anxiety, ambivalence, shame, or intimacy. Conversely, if I experienced happiness, I might have felt energized or perhaps felt a cooling, warmth, whooshing, tingling, flowing, or quickening sensation. Figure 3 depicts my

massive internal milieu of sensations and emotions and shows the potential for inaccurate present moment emotional identification.

<p><b>Silent:</b> sadness, anticipatory, <i>shame</i>, frustration, vulnerable, helplessness, anger</p> <p><b>Loud:</b> frustration, anticipatory</p> <p><b>Slow:</b> <i>sadness</i>, shame</p> <p><b>Quick:</b> avoidant, happiness/joyful, excitement, anticipatory, hope, anger, pity</p> <p><b>Cold:</b> sadness, helplessness, shame, fear</p> <p><b>Warm(th):</b> happiness/joyful, love, hope, healthy</p> <p><b>Energized:</b> happiness/joyful, excitement, overwhelmed</p> <p><b>Weighted:</b> sadness, love, avoidant, doubt, overwhelmed</p> <p><b>Anchored:</b> sadness, love</p> <p><b>Shallow:</b> doubt</p> <p><b>Shudder:</b> annoyed, frustration, nervous/anxious, ambivalent/doubt, shame, intimate</p> <p><b>Numb:</b> sadness, judgmental, shame, annoyed, anticipatory</p> <p><b>Queasy:</b> doubt, love</p> <p><b>Tension-Constriction:</b> ambivalent/doubt, anticipatory, <i>nervous/anxious</i>, annoyed, frustration, anger, guilt, isolated, withdrawn, vulnerable, sadness, <i>shame</i>, hope, fear, protective</p> <p><b>Tension-Release:</b> relief, acceptance, ambivalent/doubt, annoyed, frustration, empathic, avoidant, <i>vulnerable</i>, <i>sadness</i>, love, intimate</p> <p><b>Bound:</b> anticipatory, ambivalent/doubt, nervous/anxious, annoyed, intimate, shame, avoidant, helplessness, sadness, anger, guilt, protective</p>	<p><b>Cooling:</b> <i>relief</i>, happiness/joyful, acceptance, healthy</p> <p><b>Flooding:</b> anger, sadness, frustration, overwhelmed, vulnerable, helplessness, shame</p> <p><b>Pulsing:</b> love, healthy, strong</p> <p><b>Swallowing:</b> hope, anticipatory, nervous/anxious, shame</p> <p><b>Whooshing:</b> happiness/joyful, excitement, love, strong, fear</p> <p><b>Tingling:</b> happiness/joyful, excitement, sadness</p> <p><b>Vibrating:</b> doubt, fear, anger, pity</p> <p><b>Quieting:</b> shame, sadness, helplessness, depressed</p> <p><b>Hollowing Out:</b> avoidant, vulnerable, guilt, sadness, depressed, helplessness, annoyed</p> <p><b>Gurgling:</b> love, sadness</p> <p><b>Expanding/Extending/Rising:</b> helplessness, intimate, <i>fear</i>, <i>ambivalent/doubt</i>, <i>hope</i>, anticipatory, relief, annoyed, doubt, love, empathic</p> <p><b>Narrowing/Collapsing/Sinking:</b> helplessness, intimate, <i>fear</i> ambivalent/doubt, avoidant, <i>shame</i>, sadness, judgmental, doubt, protective</p> <p><b>Heart Beating:</b> excitement, love, nervous/anxious, anger, fear</p> <p><b>Flowing:</b> happiness/joyful, love, relief, healthy, strong, excitement, empathic</p>
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Figure 3. A list of self-identified felt sensations (x30) related to appraised emotions (x30). *Italics* denote higher frequency.

Additionally, my emotions not only had the capacity to impact my sensory experience, they also had the capacity for being experienced along with other emotions. It was typical of me to feel a multitude of varying emotions, either derived from each other (e.g. shame and protection, ambivalence and shame, ambivalence and avoidance, hope and doubt) or from sensations (e.g. feelings of vulnerability and sadness from a sense of silencing and coldness). It was less typical of me to feel solitary emotions; emotions were in relationship with other emotions, as often as sensations were in relationship with emotions. Figure 4 (see below) depicts my awareness of dual and multiple simultaneously felt emotions, revealing my potential for emotional flexibility.

<p><b>Happiness/Joy:</b> excitement  <b>Excitement:</b> happiness/joy  <b>Sadness:</b> judgmental, shame, vulnerable  <b>Intimate:</b> fear, love  <b>Acceptance:</b> relief  <b>Relief:</b> acceptance  <b>Judgmental:</b> sadness  <b>Annoyed:</b> ambivalent/doubt  <b>Ambivalent/Doubt:</b> annoyed, hope, shame, avoidance  <b>Anticipatory:</b> hope  <b>Avoidant:</b> guilt, ambivalent/doubt</p>	<p><b>Love:</b> hope, intimate, shame  <b>Fear:</b> intimate, doubt, avoidance, hope, protective  <b>Hope:</b> anticipatory, love, ambivalent/doubt  <b>Shame:</b> sadness, guilt, love, protective, ambivalent/doubt  <b>Guilt:</b> shame, avoidant  <b>Vulnerable:</b> sadness  <b>Protective:</b> shame, fear, doubt    <b>Empathic, Anger, Frustration, &amp; Pity  Fear, Doubt, &amp; Avoidance</b></p>
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*Figure 4.* A list of dual and multiple simultaneously felt emotions.

**Sensation, emotion, and environment.** The dynamic interaction between my sensations and emotions illuminated the dynamics of the relationships I created between the world around me and myself. For example, I became more aware of how often I was protecting myself and/or limiting my emotional connection from relationships for fear of intimacy, closeness, rejection, and judgment, which in turn effected how I physically and emotionally related to those relationships (e.g. with regret, annoyance, sadness, hope). In one journal entry depicting this, I wrote:

Moving this moment brings my body to awareness. I can feel my backside, my ankles, and the sides of my feet. I feel them sensing the ground as I prepare to write...I remember feeling my body quiet as I moved this experience. The stillness of a storm at the pit of my stomach. I feel like this when I want to be invited out with people who are my friends. My face fills with wide eyes and attentive ears waiting. Waiting. Waiting. When I did end up getting an invitation, my immediate thoughts are disbelief and doubt. This seems to be the case with those I want to notice me. Reflecting back on my movement, my face gave it all away. A “yeah right” mentality drawn for all to see on my face...my face saddens. A child-like pout of emotion quickly ridiculed and judged to extinction from my face...I’m angry. I have that in my body. It’s wrapped in sadness, frustration, and fills me. I mask it with being quiet...I tighten my grip to the pen. My body is bound, rigid, and ready to attack. There is a sudden energy to mobilize and resist. Almost to avoid. To not feel this anymore. To take a breath. But I will not let myself. My body will not let itself. My grip to this journal tightens to the point where I really need to let go. I need to feel of worth, like I am wanted.

I became more aware of how I could begin to see my world as morose and defeating when I dealt with sadness and shame. A journal entry depicting this reads:

My body felt like it moved, rather pushed something away. As though an energy coming near it really just had no chance of getting too close. The energy got near but was quickly maneuvered away. Slowing down created a change in the narrative and I thought to myself, as my arms created a barrier in front of me, “You will not get close.” My body is quieting in this moment and I am feeling really defeated. The sounds of the rain outside are fitting. Each drip sounds upset...I am not sure I can trust myself.

I could feel love as hope, shame, and fear, which in turn could lead me to withdraw from people and places. I held back from feeling someone's sorrow and anger, even though I could feel my insides strain. A journal entry reads:

I immediately find the low level. As if the low level found me. My body did not even resist it. It knew exactly where it belonged. So it went there. I went there with it feeling ashamed, as though something expected of me did not happen. So, I feel ashamed of myself. I sink down to this level as though I belong there. If I stay there maybe my weaknesses will not be seen. Maybe they will not notice. As they look away, my arm reaches out and then it comes back to me when their eyes shift back. My body will not let them see how I care...and so my arms come back to meet my face. To cover my face. To cover my truth. That I am seeing. But, I am not doing anything about it.

And lastly, I became more aware of how I could feel empathic towards someone I not only love, but even fear, have frustration for, or pity. I wrote:

I recall them coming close to my face and gesturing to hit me. Something inside told me I was safe in this unsafe spot, but that I needed to still be aware of what was coming towards me. I understand that I feel frustration. I wondered if they did too. A deep breath releases from me and allows me to release my punching arms into a creation of lightness in those arms. Tears fill my eyes for them. "STOP. Stop doing this." That is what I keep thinking...Why does it have to be this way? It makes me sad for them...and sad for us that it is happening like this...it does not have to be this way for them.

**Sensation, emotion, and use of Effort time fluctuation.** Engaging in ESA post-Effort time fluctuation, I felt more aware of my sensations and emotions. There was a sense of clarity and confidence in actually feeling any sensations that arose and identifying felt emotions.

Beyond a quickening sensation, the fighting attitude of accelerating revealed itself as a protector or container. I saw this as acceleration allowing for subconscious digestion of sensory experiences and emotional states. The transition from acceleration to the indulging attitude of deceleration led to a slowing down of my sensorimotor experience - helping me to sense my body. I saw this as deceleration allowing for conscious awareness of sensory experiences and emotional states. Effort fluctuation served a purpose of integrating the subconscious, or perhaps even unconscious, material with the conscious.

**Effort flow.** Effort flow was ever present when creating and reflecting upon movement during my process. I believe paying attention to my use of Effort flow as a recuperative measure and necessary caveat for practicing Effort time fluctuation helped me engage in Effort time deceleration when having a felt sense of binding. A binding Effort flow quality was pronounced during moments of holding in my emotions, such as sadness, love, intimacy, ambivalence, fear, anger, and frustration. A free Effort flow quality was the basis for allowing me to feel safe amongst highly vulnerable emotional states, which for me included sadness, shame, fear, love, and intimacy.

In consultation with my dance/movement therapist consultant, I made note of this in very large letters reading, “FLOW. Once the emotion hit, I stopped. Try to be with the emotion. Drop it and move the sensations. That is when the water fountain happened. That is when it all flowed out of me. It happened.” In this moment, I released held emotions with the help of free flow and felt a deep catharsis, visualizing a voraciously spouting water fountain. I accessed my free flow utilizing active breath connection and mobilization through space.

### **Research Questions Answered**

**ESA, self, and other.** Engaging in ESA influenced and informed the relationships I created with others and myself. Even just the process of becoming more self-aware created shifts in how I related with others and myself; fostering self-awareness via the body, amplified that process. I found an improved sense of authenticity for myself and in relationship to others, and an improved sense of agency in relationship.

**ESA and Effort fluctuation.** Effort time fluctuation provided an inroad to my embodied self-awareness by supporting the practice of embodied self-awareness. I felt more able to sense my body's sensations and identify my emotions accurately and confidently post-Effort time fluctuation. The process of Effort fluctuation alone helped me to greater connect with my body felt self and revealed the depth I could reach when engaging in self-reflection via embodied self-awareness.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

This artistic inquiry served the purpose of illuminating my subjective experience utilizing embodied self-awareness as a practice. As a developing dance/movement therapist, I sought to develop connection to others and myself, because I believed it to be vital for professional development and clinical practice. Within the balance of developing body awareness via ESA and conceptualizing that awareness via conceptual self-awareness, I was able to relationally reconnect intra and interpersonally.

Findings revealed that ESA is a body-centered process that, when cultivated, impacted how I could relate to others and how I felt about myself. It provided me with an objective lens to my subjective experience because I allowed myself to be in the present moment with all my physical and psychological sensations and emotions. In my research process, I became aware of my sensory and emotional experiences, and found understanding, acceptance, and choice to embrace ownership of my true, authentic experiences in life; life which is both intra and interpersonal.

Making the choice to embrace ownership of my true experience, I deepened my self-understanding as a human being and gained valuable knowledge into why understanding myself would aid my development as a dance/movement therapist. Furthermore, recapitulating movement with Effort time fluctuation, that is speeding up and slowing down my sensorimotor process, supported integration of my unconscious and conscious mind/body experience. Additionally, it was revealed to me that Effort flow, specifically the indulging quality of free flow, deepened my capacity for in-the-moment self-reflection cultivated by ESA. There was an abundance of personal change and growth gained from my engagement with ESA as a practice towards gaining greater self-knowledge.



## **Impact of ESA**

**How did engaging in embodied self-awareness influence and inform the relationships I created with others and myself?** I found my human experience is not simplistic. My data showed me the complexity and intricacies of my physical and mental being when I brought awareness to felt sensations, emotions, and associated behavior. The complexity was spontaneous, emergent, and non-linear while the intricacies multifaceted. My body sensations related to appraisal of emotions affecting my behavioral responses, and moreover, had an effect on how I experienced my surroundings. In addition, emotions I felt brought on body sensations, multiple emotions were experienced simultaneously, and all sensory and emotional experiences were linked in some capacity. My awareness to and subsequent intentionality towards understanding my sensory and emotional experience with CSA revealed how I was engaging with the world around me as well as how I was internally occupying myself. I was not truthfully engaging with the world and myself from an emotionally integrated place, where mind and body worked together. My feelings of disconnection to other and diminished expressivity may have stemmed from disconnection to myself. Now, I feel more connected to my surroundings by bringing attention to the critical aspects of how my sensations and emotions interact and impact each other when I am in the world. I have a greater sense of authenticity in relationships created with others, my environment, and myself. I have enhanced my capacity to feel empathy for others as well as exist in relationship to myself with less judgment and shaming.

These results revealed to me that when I let myself cherish my embodied experiences through ESA, I had the option to make a choice with CSA to not deny myself the satisfaction, vulnerability, or acceptance of my emotional state. I allowed myself to feel what shame feels like in my body and learned to tolerate that emotion while knowing I could change how it impacted

my very existence. I could tell my friend getting a “Peter hug” that I felt uncomfortable because I was afraid of saying goodbye and did not trust myself to let go. With a sense of authenticity, I accepted the complexity of my human experience and this helped me to not only regulate my emotions, but also make choices that served me well, which felt as though I had attained a heightened sense of agency.

Practicing ESA, I felt more aware of how I had been experiencing my emotional and physical self within my environment, which fostered healthier CSA (Fogel, 2009). I felt more actively engaged in decision-making of how I could continue to interact with my environment. I actively engaged conscious decision-making skills when relating to others (e.g. with fear, shame, protection, love, compassion, empathy, hope), and when relating to myself (e.g. with fear, shame, protection, love, compassion). Put simply, I enhanced my ability to self-regulate. Fogel (2009) demonstrated this when he explained his understanding of how one’s awareness and understanding of their sensations, emotions, and behavior illuminates how one can adjust how they handle themselves in any given situation. A time of fear or unbearable sadness could feel “okay” in the moment and by not occupying my being or counteracting my approach to truthfully relating in relationship, I accepted the fact that I was sad and allowed myself to feel sad. I accepted the fact that I was fearful, and allowed myself to feel fear. Taking ownership and responsibility for my present moment experience led to less projection and displacement of my internal experience onto others, and greater ownership of projections I may have been putting onto others. Projection and displacement are psychological defense mechanisms (Ivey et al., 2012). Projection denies self-recognition of one’s own thoughts and behaviors, subsequently leading to seeing one’s own thoughts and behaviors in someone else (Ivey et al., 2012). Displacement occurs when one’s own thoughts and feelings gets directed towards or seen within

someone else that was not the original source, and is typically associated with repressed past experience (Ivey et al., 2012).

I made informed decisions which literature deemed probable. Fogel (2009) noted “conceptual self-awareness informed by embodied self-awareness is the best source for making decisions beneficial to both self and others” (p. 97). This created a felt sense of authenticity in ESA and, as mentioned by Daubenmier et al. (2011) and Fogel (2009), my availability to and understanding of my present moment experience (i.e. ESA and CSA) harmoniously found connection. I felt as though I was respectfully and consciously making my own decisions when relating to and connecting with others emotionally, physically, and verbally, rather than deviating from engaging with my own authentic experience candidly. This proved evident when fearfully, but supportively holding space and time for a client to directly threaten me verbally in close proximity. Being able to hold space and hold time meant to be with all the physiological and psychological stimuli in the present moment while still fostering a safe and supportive environment. Empathically reflecting back my fear and support to my client that occurred from being in relation to my client came from accessing ESA and utilizing what I noticed to better empathically enter into therapeutic relationship striving for mutual empathy (Fogel, 2009; Jordan, 2010; Sandel et al., 1993). This moment-to-moment interactive dynamic is fundamental to Chace’s approach to DMT (Sandel et al., 1993) and I taught myself to do it as Fogel (2009) illustrated was possible utilizing ESA principles of resourcing, slowing down, coregulation, verbalization, self-regulation, and re-engagement. Ownership of my authentic experiences and internal responses, like that of unbearable sadness, tension-constriction, and shame, would not be ignored or held to the idea I would have to be without it to be in relationship with other and myself.

Moreover, I expanded my awareness to how I believed we create relationships every second of the day. I realized that when I saw someone, my body inherently experienced such sensations as widening, tingles, whooshes, breathing, emptying, filling, for example. My mind experienced feelings such as humor, happiness, sadness, shame, love, fear, anger, discomfort, disgust, or vulnerability, along with my body. I feel this to be one of the minute forms of building relationship; relationship that is built from initial subjective assessment of “how I feel when I am in your presence.” Being open to this consciousness led me towards being in relationship more meaningfully, authentically, and empathically, which are key components of a Chace approach to DMT and RCT (Jordan, 2010; Sandel et al., 1993). According to Bailey & Leigh (2013), bringing awareness to creating action from internal states lead towards understanding that duality. I brought attention to my full mind/body experience without judgment by attending to my body firstly with ESA. Then, I conceptualized that awareness with CSA to draw meaning and integrate body with mind. I became aware of how to notice my body’s sensations and associated feelings via ESA. Via CSA, I thought about why what followed would follow. Thus, I was better equipped to understand why I experienced disconnection and became more ready, able, and willing to foster reconnection because I fostered self-realization. RCT concepts include that of guiding client’s to foster self-realization as well as self-actualization and autonomy, moving towards mutual empathy to transform disconnection (Cannon et al., 2008). Subsequently, because I transformed my disconnection, I felt I had become better equipped to guide my clients in a similar process. My therapeutic relationships had more authentic inroads to fostering mutual empathy and I had less superficial inroads to demonstrating empathic reflection. ESA is a foundation of empathic reflection and empathic reflection within the therapeutic relationship is an inroad to mutual empathy, a foundation of RCT.

I believe everyone has their own mind/body that navigates their experience in any given moment. When one mind/body relates to another mind/body, I believe there is an unspoken, felt intimacy dictating a shared experience, much like Critchley & Garfinkel (2013) and Hafner (2013) allude to when mentioning how our sensations, linked with past experience, influence interpersonal dynamics. Perhaps, this is indicative of the collective human spirit. We all have the potential to be navigating rather than to be being. I was navigating emotional suppression for fear of intimacy and vulnerability, when I could have been involved with being expressive of my fears. Further expression of my authentic experience proved itself to be gratifying, relieving, and empowering when I made myself available to it. I developed further investment towards acceptance of my internal milieu and improving interpersonal relationships by fostering greater empathic reflection, thereby improving my intra/interpersonal connectedness and quality of life because I felt better about myself and my relationships (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Critchley & Garfinkel, 2013; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Finlay, 2006; Fogel, 2009).

Similarly to making decisions, I felt a sense of safety in relationship to others and effectively chose where my body moved, knew how it made me feel, and when my associated cognitions influenced my behavior. Fogel (2011) explained this as ownership of one's own body and differentiating ownership between oneself and other. For me, safely being in relationship entails feeling secure, autonomous, flexible, aware, and respectful. I was able to connect to those traits of personal safety in relationship at a greater frequency, and that positively influenced my overall physical and psychological well-being. Those experiences validated literature by Bailey & Leigh (2013), Critchley & Garfinkel (2013), Daubenmier et al. (2011), and Fogel (2009, 2011) that supported the belief that ESA is essential to a person's health. My experiences had provided me with a greater sense of emotional health. I often had protected myself emotionally and

allowed my sensory experience to dictate my choices. When I made the choice to notice my sensory-emotional experience, I harbored greater objective awareness, amplifying my subjective awareness in the moment. I became more aware of an additional option(s) from which to make a choice(s) for how I related to my environment. There was more clarity of my full experience.

My attention to my emotions shifted, changed, and evolved. Where before I avoided, ignored, or was naïve to my emotional functioning and behavior, I gained skills toward bringing my attention to how I was experiencing my emotional functioning and how it impacted my daily life and intra/interpersonal relating. This promoted a greater sense of emotional health, resonance, integration, balance, and health where I could better tolerate my emotions as Fogel (2009) suggested. Relational-cultural theory depicts this shift as moving away “...from feelings of self-doubt, shame, and frustration to a clearer understanding of...mutually empathic, respectful, and authentic relations...” (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 487). I moved away from suppressing my feelings of doubt, shame, and internalized guilt to move into expressing them, which developed more meaningful relationships I valued. I gained a greater ability to be with my authentic experiences in the moment, rather than to relate to them with dishonesty. My willingness towards being available to ESA proved necessary to be connected mind/body and for achieving inner connectivity/outer expressivity that fostered emotional authenticity and flexibility, which Hackney (1998) believed to be valuable when relating to self, other, and the environment. Awareness, tolerance, and expression of unattended to body sensations, emotions, behaviors effectively improved my personal and therapeutic relationships because I had greater access to changing how I was affected by them. Fostering ESA improved my sense of authenticity and sense of agency in relationship to self and other because the interactions I began to make with the people around me were coming from a sense of intrapersonal connectedness,

improving my sense of interpersonal relatedness. A feeling of “I am not going to be like this with you and myself. I can, however, be like this with us.” This sentiment was resounding and impactful for me in my process with ESA. I had facilitated change within my own life; change most literature surrounding ideologies of embodied self-awareness, like Fogel (2009), Pagis (2009), and Siegel (2012), inferred as developed from my practice of ESA.

**How did Effort fluctuation of the time motion factor provide an inroad to my embodied self-awareness?** During private self-reflection, I fluctuated my use of Effort time while creating improvisational movement responses to recollected memories I deemed meaningful. Accessing the continuum of acceleration and deceleration provided further skill for engaging in body sensing via ESA. I felt more sensitive to sensations and emotions that I was experiencing and was able to identify them at greater frequency and with a fuller orientation to my subjective experience. My sensory-emotional experiences became more integrated and led to acceptance of my behavioral responses as susceptible to change. The safety I found within myself to be with my full experience and find serenity in knowing I could be okay feeling any and all sensory-emotional responses proved to be greater emotional tolerance. Accessing my use of Effort flow, specifically freeing my flow using an active breath connection, created space for managing my emotional state in the moment, which contributed to gaining greater emotional tolerance. In the example of an embodied journal entry where I felt threatened, I utilized this concept to acknowledge my fear and frustration that had not been present with a client a moment prior. Rather than reacting with fear in a fight, flight, or freeze response, I responded with awareness to my fear and tolerated the frustration, thereby communicating effectively and maintaining therapeutic rapport. This relates back to Hackney’s (1998) demonstration of how “we can attend to our breathing to become attuned to changes in our inner attitude as we go

through our day” (p. 52). By attending to my breath connection when afraid, I became attuned to fear and facilitated beneficial change within my own response pattern. I combatted emotional dysregulation and clearly communicated how I felt in relationship to my client. My client was privy to that attuned response, thereby allowing us to facilitate change in his reactivity by way of mutual empathy and empathic reflection, indicative of a Chace approach to DMT (Sandel et al., 1993).

Specific to both Effort time qualities, acceleration revealed itself for me as a method of emotional protection and deceleration as a method of emotional stimulation. Effort fluctuation between the two polarities reflected emotional tolerance and integration. When I sensed my body along the fighting quality of acceleration, I noticed emotional rigidity, avoidance, and an overwhelmingly intense sensory experience at times, such as tension, binding, and uncontrollable quickening. I came to understand via fluctuation of the Effort qualities that acceleration served a purpose of allowing my true sensory-emotional experience to flourish subconsciously, as a source of protection from emotions that were overwhelming for me, such as sadness. I paid mind to my body’s locomotion, more so than conscious awareness of my sensations and emotions. It was as if my body was power-surfing sensations and emotions, like a battery, for the experience of emotional intensity. During one data collection session, I recall moving with acceleration and thinking I was angry but unsure if I had in fact felt anger emotionally. When moving towards deceleration, I recall thinking I was sad, again unsure if I had in fact felt sadness emotionally. Coming back to acceleration and checking back in with my ESA, I noticed that if I focused on my movement, I could verify that I was feeling angry and/or sad, as indicated by the self-examination rubric noted by Fogel (2009) for such things as pain management. Thus, rather than



protecting myself from anger and sadness with acceleration, I could express anger and sadness in acceleration to re-assess my emotional intensity and tolerance (Fogel, 2009).

On the other hand, slowing down my movement quality provided me with time to acknowledge, sense, and own my body's sensory-emotional experience. Deceleration was met with emotional intensity at a much more conscious and embodied level. I sensed my body more effectively and confidently. I was able to differentiate between how I was feeling and what my body was experiencing, whilst making connections between the two. Bringing direct attention to my implicit sensory-emotional experience via deceleration, in turn created an explicit experience of it. For instance, when I felt an intense sadness, my body experienced that emotion as varying sensations such as hollowing out and numbing. I could, at a greater capacity, sense my body hollowing out and numbing when I slowed down my motor process. I could feel when my body silenced, tingled, and expanded, because I provided myself with ample time to connect to my intrapersonal being and carefully acknowledge my sensory-emotional experience. Slowing down gave me the ability to anticipate and also have a new, tolerant relationship to my anticipator, an indication of trust in sensing myself, especially during times of overwhelming emotion. This felt cathartic and emotionally gratifying. Fogel (2009) labeled this as the final ESA principle called "letting go" (p. 27) that could only be reached by engaging in the prior seven of eight basic principles, one of which included "slowing down" (p. 26).

Accelerating, decelerating, and fluctuating between both effort qualities provided integration of my sensory and emotional experience. My sensory-emotional experience became a fully embodied experience, which is ESA. I was led to a feeling of acceptance of my sensory-emotional experience and a sense of safety within myself, because I harbored greater conscious awareness of my full experience (i.e. a subjective lens and an objective lens). I understood and

shifted my relationship to my sensory-emotional experience so that I could feel acceptance and safety (e.g. engaged in healthier CSA from practicing ESA) (Fogel, 2009). This led to an expansion of emotional tolerance and understanding of possible emotional response patterns (Fogel, 2009), such as shame and guilt. According to RCT, this was unhealed trauma that needed attention (Cannon et al., 2008) and could be healed from growth-fostering relationships (Jordan, 2010) like the therapeutic relationship employing empathic reflection (Sandel et al., 1993). I believe my body's sensory responses greatly influenced my emotions during interpersonal moments I deemed as intuitively felt meaningful experiences. My body sensed, and in turn, each sense was given appraisal leading to a subjective emotional experience. I believe this process has had the potential to become unconscious material. Bringing awareness to the subjectivity of my sensory experience led to a new objective perspective. I realized that bringing conscious awareness to those sensory responses revealed how they might be deeply patterned emotional and behavioral responses. For instance, my body could be implicitly re-experiencing trauma during heightened emotional arousal states. Unhealed trauma from my childhood invited itself to the party. This in turn, may have created my pattern of felt sensation and emotion linked to a behavioral response. It seemed fair to believe I would experience and did always experience a specific emotion when I deepened my sensate experience. Therefore, it is befitting to suggest that improving one's own ESA would provide opportunity to change patterns that no longer serves a person's emotional well-being.

Relative to utilizing Effort fluctuation, it was happenstance to discover Effort flow as a significant portion and benefactor to my research process as a source of self-regulation. During intense moments of self-reflection where I found myself uncontrollably crying, I lost my sense of present moment living, was disconnected from my ESA, and became prone to

defensive/protective body states. I became engulfed by my emotion, essentially causing my body to sit still, frozen, or rigid. I became stuck in those moments of emotional suffering, tried pushing my emotions down out of my awareness, and became emotionally dysregulated. To combat feeling stuck, I learned to access a free flowing Effort quality that served as an inroad into emotionally self-regulating during my process with ESA. Free flow was not only a useful tool in self-regulation, but it also deepened my capacity for in-the-moment self-reflection cultivated by ESA because I found it to be a recuperative strategy when delving into self-reflection of my sensory and emotional experience. I had a sense of greater emotional tolerance in the present moment when I accessed free flow by moving throughout space and refocusing my attention to my breath connection when emotionally triggered or dysregulated, mentioned by Daubenmier et al. (2011) as a technique for developing ESA. Taking a moment to engage in natural human breathing reignited my feelings of readiness and willingness to further tolerate intra and interpersonal stimulation. Emotional self-regulation was much more effectively accessed due to emotional tolerance gained from Effort fluctuation and my active use of free flow as a self-regulation and recuperative tool.

### **Assumptions/Biases**

ESA was beneficial as a tool for self-discovery and was supported by literature and my personal experience. I accessed conscious awareness of interoception and body schema in the present moment; this awareness was my subjective experience. My desire for cultivating authentic relationships presented itself as a bias. Therefore, generalizability for the practice of ESA is uncertain, and additional research and personal accounts of those utilizing ESA is needed. However, it can be said that my use of ESA, and utilizing Effort fluctuation during private self-reflection as a counterpart to ESA, provided me with a deepening of the awareness to

(i.e. ESA) and understanding of (i.e. CSA) my sensations and emotions as well as how they impacted my intra and interpersonal experience. I gained greater intrapersonal connection that led me to feel more healthily interpersonally connected, which included safety, awareness, openness, and acceptance.

Additionally, it is assumed should a dance/movement therapist personally practice ESA amidst the therapeutic relationship, that this may allow them to develop greater kinesthetic attunement and empathy with clients. The therapist theoretically uses their own mind/body experience to relate to their client's own internal process, potentially inspiring expression of that process from the client (i.e. empathic reflection). ESA becomes a tool in providing interpretation of a client's intrapersonal experience, thus creating opportunity for a dance/movement therapist to become curious and connected to asking specific questions regarding sensory, emotional, and behavioral experiences. The dance/movement therapist, whom uses the body as source of knowledge, would be more susceptible to owning any projections placed on their client because the dance/movement therapist would have the chance to directly become aware of their embodied experience in relationship to their client's presence.

Lastly, gaining insight into ESA contributes to the field of DMT by validating the importance and benefits of the mind/body connection. DMT practice is body-centered and strives for multifaceted integration of an individual, via the mind and the body. ESA can be described similarly, where ESA is a body-centered and self-reflective practice striving for integration of an individual's sensory and emotional experience leading to a mind/body connection. I suggest a split between the mind and body may be described as occurring when one may not be as susceptible to fully becoming conscious to both the subjective and objective experience, as well

as the implicit and explicit experience they have, perhaps demonstrating a lesser degree of emotional tolerance and integration.

### **Implications for DMT**

Dance/movement therapists utilizing ESA may be able to make the choice to be open to staying connected to their sensory and emotional experience, specifically when creating and sustaining therapeutic relationships. Should the dance/movement therapist know when feelings such as sadness, anger, fear, hope, acceptance, and empathy, or sensations such as tension-constriction, tension-release, and rapid heart beating begin to arise for them within the therapeutic relationship, the dance/movement therapist may be able to use this information as clinical intervention, such as empathic reflection, in therapeutic relationships and while guiding clients into their own internal process. Provided the dance/movement therapist's connection to their sensation, emotions, and behavior remains diligent and integrated, the dance/movement therapist's psychological and physical integrity regarding utilizing the body as communication is validated, and clinically effective for practice with clients when providing facilitation of a person entering into their mind/body connection. The dance/movement therapist needs be aware of somatic transference and countertransference while tracking non-verbal information.

Dosamantes-Beaudry (1997) described somatic transference as “the somatic reactions the patient has toward her therapist” (p. 522) and somatic countertransference as “somatic reactions a therapist has toward her patient at a particular moment during treatment” (p. 522). An effective therapeutic relationship between the dance/movement therapist and their client involves “visually and kinesthetically perceiving the patient's movement expressions...to incorporate the emotional content of the patient's behavior into...movement responses” (Sandel et al., 1993, p. 79). The

dance/movement therapist could have the capacity to “sense what was possible” (Sandel et al., p. 80) and further therapeutic rapport with empathic reflection because of ESA.

I posit that empathic reflection, and thereby the therapeutic relationship, depend not only on present moment interaction, spontaneity, and intuition between therapist and client, but also on a therapist’s access to their own ESA. ESA is grounded in present moment experience that is unplanned and available. Therefore, if the dance/movement therapist is present with their ESA, they may demonstrate empathy towards their clients and remain flexible to what arises within the therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, employing RCT effectively considers awareness of connection and disconnection, intra and interpersonally. Therefore, maintaining access to ESA may prove mutually beneficial within RCT counseling. A therapist’s misrepresentation or insensitivity to a client’s internal emotional process would have a greater capacity to be noticed. The dance/movement therapist may utilize this awareness to continue assessing, intervening, and exploring with the client, thus providing the dance/movement therapist with continued learning and clinical development as well as deepening a client’s emotional tolerance and fostering therapeutic healing.

Additionally, I propose that dance/movement therapists may use Effort time fluctuation as an intervention for clients to access their own ESA. During my research process, I have been able to utilize embodied self-awareness to intervene on my feelings of disconnection in relationship by bringing awareness to how my implicit experience dictated my external representation of myself. I was also able to intervene on my feelings of intrapersonal disconnection associated with feeling as though I was being inauthentic to my true internal process and invalidating my deepest of felt emotions. I taught myself to engage in ESA, as literature said was possible. Within the therapeutic relationship, it may serve as an intervention

for client's access and re-connect to their own sensory and emotional experience as it pertains to patterned behavior, arousal states, emotional sensitivity, sensory stimulation, mood regulation, and emotional tolerance possibly caused by trauma and cultural factors (Cannon et al., 2008; Fogel, 2009; Jordan, 2010; Sandel et al., 1993).

## **Conclusions**

As a dance/movement therapist, I believe the body serves as a method of change. I desired enhancing my ability to utilize my body as communication with ESA to better enter and sustain clinically effective therapeutic relationships. As a person whom felt disconnected from his peers and saw himself as missing opportunities to intimately connect with others, I sought out ESA as a source of self-discovery and hopeful change.

Throughout this research process, I have developed my approach to relating. I brought awareness to my mind/body connection by attending to the intricacies of my sensations, emotions, and associated behavioral responses, as well as how my internal process illuminated interactions with my external world. My awareness guided understanding of my sensations, emotions, and behaviors, ultimately shaping my perspective. This has proven beneficial to my identity as a dance/movement therapist, whom actively accesses the body as a source for deepening a therapeutic process. I have more profound validity to DMT as a counseling theory that is empowering and healing because of its emphasis on movement within and outside of the body.

You move, I move, and we move. When we move together, we can feel and think less. We can practice allowing ourselves to feel with ESA in real-time and then talk about it to emotionally, physically, socially, and psychologically develop as human beings. I hope for other developing dance/movement therapists, or other body-centered professionals, to expose

themselves to embodied self-awareness to gain greater insight into their intra and interpersonal identity. I also hope for continued research on embodied self-awareness as a practice and intervention style, as well as Effort time fluctuation as an intervention method, thus adding to the sparse literature currently present on this seemingly complex mosaic of a “notice what you notice” directive I once heard in the beginning stages of my DMT career. How to notice depended on my availability and vulnerability to the present moment. Drawing meaning depended on my level of ability to comprehend and put language to the present moment. Therefore, to “notice what I notice” meant connecting to my ESA. Casting protective and/or defensive suppression of my ESA, such as becoming stuck in feeling emotionally flooded or disconnecting myself from my sensory-emotional experience, limited my intra and interpersonal connectedness in the present moment. My CSA took over and my ESA became prone to inauthentic expression and misrepresentation. Within therapeutic relationships, CSA can become less judgmental, defensive, and protective when ESA is expressed. To better into and sustain clinically effective therapeutic relationships, I needed to connect to the balance of ESA and CSA, which evidenced a healthy, supportive, and encouraging mind/body connection from the development of ESA.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Authentic Movement**

As described by Levy (2005) citing Whitehouse (1979), authentic movement can be described as a movement experience largely comprised of a “I am moved” experience, as opposed to an “I move” experience; the mover moves from inner impulses that are emotionally charged, where control and choice are relinquished (Levy, 2005).

#### **Body Schema**

The awareness of oneself in the world (Balestrieri et al., 2011; Farah, 1995; Fogel, 2009; Fogel, 2011); involves “...an awareness of the movement and coordination between different parts of the body and between our body and the environment” (Fogel, 2009, p. 11); to “sense that our body belongs to us and no one else...and the awareness that our body has boundaries that separate us from other objects and bodies” (Fogel, 2009, p. 308).

#### **Conceptual Self-Awareness**

Intentional, logical, and rational self-awareness of “what I think about myself in the realm of concepts that...may not be directly connected to feelings from the body” (Fogel, 2009, p. 309); thought-based (Fogel, 2009).

#### **Effort**

Separate from the what, where, and why qualities of movement within the Laban Taxonomy (i.e. Body, Space, and Shape), Effort is the quality of movement related to how someone chooses to move (Moore, 2010); includes four motion factors of weight, space, time and flow; “the expressive and communicative aspects of bodily movement” (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009, p. 228).

### **Effort Flow**

“Involves varying attitudes towards the precision and control with which a motion is performed...actions done with bound flow appear controlled, restrained, careful, taut, and precise...motions performed with free flow appear abandoned, fluent, easygoing, loose, and unrestricted,” (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012, p. 147); the effort motion factor of flow include the fighting attitude of binding and the indulging attitude of free flowing (Moore, 2010).

### **Effort Fluctuation**

“When the mover is going back and forth between the two polar effort elements of the same motion factor” (L. Goldman, personal communication, February 6, 2016); a gradual change in effort qualities from indulging to fighting, and vice-versa (Moore, 2010).

### **Effort Time**

“Involves varying attitudes towards the urgency of an action” (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012, p. 146); “the effort exerted to pace the movement adroitly” (Moore, 2010, p. 70); the two polarities of the effort motion factor of time include the fighting attitude of accelerating, or speeding up, and the indulging attitude of decelerating, or prolonged movement (Moore, 2010).

### **Embodied**

As described by Csordas (1993), the term embodied can be explained as “attending with” and “attending to” the body. This resulted in an awareness of movement that encapsulates not only sensing the skeletal/muscular body move in relationship to the environment, but also sensing inner emotions, intuition, and flow of energy with said movement (Hervey, 2007).

### **Embodied Self-Awareness**

“The ability to pay attention to ourselves, to feel our sensations, emotions, and movements on-line, in the present moment, without the mediating influence of judgmental

thoughts. It is composed of sensations like warm, tingly, soft, nauseated, dizzy; emotions such as happy, sad, threatened; and body senses like feeling the coordination (or lack of coordination) between the arms and legs while swimming, or sensing our shape and size (fat or thin), and sensing our location relative to objects and other people” (Fogel, 2009, p. 311); body-based (Fogel, 2009).

### **Empathic Reflection**

“Empathic reflection is the key process by which the dance therapist incorporates clients’ spontaneous expressions into the ongoing movement experience and responds to those expressions in an empathic way” (Sandel et al., 1993, p. 98); when the therapist reflects back to the client their most subjective of feelings and internal reactions (Downey, 2016).

### **Interoception**

The ability to sense and feel one’s inner states, sensations, and emotions (Craig, 2004; Daubenmier et al., 2009; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Hindi, 2012; Siegel, 2012); “monitoring the internal milieu of the body in relation to the environment” (Fogel, 2009, p. 11); “awareness of the body...correlated not only with enhanced self-understanding, but also with empathy and compassion” (Siegel, 2012, p.228).

### **Mind/Body Connection**

“Mind is indeed part of the body and the body affects the mind...When speaking of the body, we are not only describing the functional aspects of movement, but how our psyche and emotions are affected by our thinking and how movement itself effects change within them” (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009, p. 5); a widely growing cultural ideology of the interrelationship between mind and body (Nemetz, 2006).

### **Motion Factor**



As described in Laban's taxonomy, the four motion factors, Space, Weight, Time, and Flow, are described as on a continuum between fighting and indulging qualities (Moore, 2010).

### **Self-Awareness**

The practice of bringing awareness to the self as a distinct entity, separate from another person or the environment (Bailey & Leigh, 2013; Chein, 1944; Daubenmier et al., 2011; Fogel, 2009; Siegel, 2012).

### **SIFT**

SIFT is sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts (Siegel, 2007; Siegel & Bryson, 2011); that is, bodily felt sensations, visual representations of your mind's eye, emotions, and word-based thinking (Siegel, 2013). SIFT is used when accessing the mind/body connection to foster non-judgmental awareness of the body's sensory and cognitive experience (Siegel, 2012).

## Appendix B

### Movement Assessment Coding Sheet

