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MANY TRUTHS: A CASE RECORD REVIEW OF HOW TEACHING A DANCE CLASS
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SHAPED MY PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of Columbia College Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling

Department of Creative Arts Therapies

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Abstract

This thesis is a self-reflective exploration of an ongoing investigation into my professional identity development using a case record review. The purpose of this review was to gain a better understanding of how my knowledge of dance/movement therapy influenced my facilitation of a dance class for students with special needs. This process took place through the teaching of a community dance class for students with special needs called Friday Night Dance Party (FNDP). This review utilized historical data in the form of a reflection sheet, art making, and stream of consciousness journaling completed after each class. Upon the completion of data collection, theme analysis resulted in the following themes: staying grounded within my own body through the use of breath, offering flexible class structure with choice in the dance classroom, use of my informed intuition, and improvisation. A dance performance illustrating my use of the frameworks of dance/movement therapy and dance education, in the creation of a dance class for special needs students was presented at the Columbia College Chicago Department of Creative Arts Therapies' Annual Student and Faculty Benefit Concert in July 2017.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Diving head first into things has never been daunting for me. I have been an adventure-seeker, a problem solver, and spark starter since I can remember. From a young age I have had a passion to stay in motion, and I always seem to be bringing others into orbit with me. I have always had an interest in working with the special needs population. For the purpose of this paper, a person with special needs is defined as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or a record of such an impairment, or is perceived by others to have such an impairment” (A Guide to Disability Rights Laws, 2009). At the age of 19, I began working part time with an association that created therapeutic, recreational and social programs to serve “participants of all ages and ability levels...to assist people with disabilities in achieving their greatest success” (Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association, [NISRA], n.d., Participants, para. 1). These programs are designed to encourage independent living skills acquisition and social interaction between participants in fun, therapeutic settings that include home/assisted living centers, classrooms and a variety of recreational settings and activities (Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association, [NISRA], n.d., Programs). This association also creates programs, camps and other recreational activities where individuals with special needs, or who are differently abled, may have designated and pre-determined staff-to-participant ratios to increase participant success, and which also accommodate any physical or sensory limitation a participant may have (NISRA, n.d., Participants, para. 1).

The programs I worked with were often set in public places or social situations, designed in a way that allowed my experience teaching dance to help me in guiding and encouraging motor and non-locomotor skill acquisition. These therapeutic and recreational programs required

me to take on an approach of guiding an individual through tolerating an emotionally or physically overwhelming sensation or situation. During my experience of leading a movement-based program for toddlers with special needs, I noticed a lack in my own awareness of how to address or attune to the needs of my students effectively. I noticed that I would want to enhance the recreational experiences the individuals in the programs were having, and I was not sure how to do that. I also was not always sure how to best accommodate the setting or activity to their particular need. I wanted to clarify how I was engaging with this population in a therapeutic setting, and I also wanted to continue utilizing my skill sets from my dance education background, as well as find ways to expand this work. The choice to apply for, and later enroll in Columbia College Chicago's Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling Program, felt like the most natural extension of my experience as a dance educator, and to my passion in working with the special needs population.

During my second year as a graduate student, I happened to reconnect with a former dance teacher, mentor, and employer. I briefly mentioned my work with individuals, specifically younger individuals, with special needs and there - in that moment - was the spark. She expressed her interest in adding a class for students with special needs at her private dance studio. This was something she previously thought about including but was unable due to a lack of qualified instructors. We discussed how my past experience with special needs populations, history with her studio, degree in dance education, and current training in dance/movement therapy equipped me with a unique skill set to create such a class. A few phone calls, texts, a business lunch, and hugs later, it was decided that I would introduce a new class at the studio. This new class, Friday Night Dance Party (FNDP) was designed and created to meet the unique needs of special needs students in the northwest suburban area of Chicago.

Creating FNDP was an exciting opportunity for me - one that words do not always feel adequate to describe. Any other work I had done with individuals with special needs had been done as part of a larger system and program setting. Now, it was my turn to customize and create the environment I envisioned for my students. I began to feel an overwhelming sense of curiosity at the same time as feeling crushingly nervous. I often felt insecure in my ability to bring my experiences together into this new setting. I wanted to be sure that what I crafted into Friday Night Dance Party would be appropriate for the students and their needs. I knew how to teach dance, and I knew how to work with individuals with special needs in social and recreational settings. Now I was attempting to find out how my newly gained knowledge and understanding of dance/movement therapy techniques and approaches could help me facilitate a therapeutic dance class for students with special needs.

The owner of the studio and I discussed that FNDP would be a dance class for students with special needs housed in a fun, creative and social environment. It should also be noted that when advertising for FNDP, the owner and I agreed to place "SN* Special Needs" next to the class name, allowing for an open interpretation of the term, Special Needs, to students and parents. There were no minimal requirements to be in the class, and no students were declined based on unique need. The range and variety of special needs was purposefully not defined or limited for FNDP, and the owner of the studio and I welcomed all questions and conversations from parents about their student's ability and comfort level to participate in the class. The structure of the 45-minute class ran similarly to the other dance technique and creative dance classes held at the private studio. Attendance was taken, followed by a warm-up, across the floor sequences and some movement phrases or routines were taught as well. Dance technique/skill acquisition along with creative and movement games and activities comprised the class. The

dance technique for FNDP was focused in ballet and jazz technique. Creative activities and games introduced props such as scarves and wands, and games such as freeze dance and several others were included in almost every class. The goals of FNDP were to encourage dance technique acquisition, promote creativity, and foster social relationships between the students.

There were moments within FNDP that left me questioning how I was approaching my students. Was it as a teacher or therapist? Which lens was I using when approaching this class? How were my skill sets influencing one another during the teaching of this class? Classroom management became an area where this line of questioning illuminated my need to clarify physical boundaries between the students of FNDP. One particular student was very affectionate and wanted to constantly be hugging or touching her classmates. This physical contact was not always wanted or reciprocated by other students throughout the class, but generally was welcome at the beginning and end of class. It was important to me that each student felt comfortable and confident in the classroom space. Guidelines for class, such as keeping to our own space and body felt imperative to the safety of the class. I wanted to foster friendships between the students of FNDP, but needed to maintain safety within our expressive setting. I knew that maintaining safety was important, but where was this knowledge stemming from? Was it my experience as a dance educator, and knowing my students need adequate space in order to practice and engage in movement mastery? Or was it from my therapist awareness to invite physical and body boundaries in order to maintain a safe creative and expressive space? How could I ensure safety for the students on psychosocial levels and emotional levels? Situations like this created what felt like an ongoing list of questions for myself as educator and developing dance/movement therapist. What techniques and/or frameworks was I using to facilitate this 45-minute class and what were those informed by? What professional role was I taking on in this class, dance

educator or therapist? And from these questions, what professional identity was I beginning to recognize and develop for myself? Was there one?

Purpose

The purpose of this review was to gain a better understanding of how my knowledge of dance/movement therapy influenced my facilitation of a dance class for students with special needs. I was particularly interested in how my background and experiences as a dance educator and dance/movement therapist informed me separately, and in varying combinations. I wanted to better understand how and where these two identities I hold so strongly to as dance educator and dance/movement therapist, collided combined, and collaborated. This project also developed into a process of discovering aspects of my professional identity. I wondered about how I understood the difference between these two roles and where, at times they combined into a single role. I wondered how I can separate myself into two identities, or wear different 'hats' to fill a job role or title? Between clinical practica and placements, and teaching technique and creative movement classes every week, I was constantly finding myself in both worlds of dance/movement therapy and dance education, and engaging in both roles of dance/movement therapist and dance educator.

The exact alignment of being a dance/movement therapy and counseling student with an opportunity to teach and create a class of this nature was distinctive for my own career trajectory. I was a mover who became an educator, and from that experience a curiosity developed about how I could more effectively meet the needs of those I was teaching. That curiosity led me to study and pursue a career in dance/movement therapy. Friday Night Dance Party was also a very personal project that pulled me in so many directions, both personal and professional. It was always on my mind to ensure the work I was doing was ethically sound, and did not cross ethical

boundaries. The class needed to stay within the therapeutic properties that dance and movement can provide. I wanted to be clear in my intentions that Friday Night Dance Party was a dance class for students with special needs with the potential to be therapeutic, and was in fact not dance/movement therapy for individuals with special needs. It developed into a learning opportunity for both of my careers as dance educator and as dance/movement therapist. This study adds to the greater body of dance/movement therapy literature by addressing dance/movement therapists serving as dance educators to students with special needs. I believe this work can add to the current body of knowledge that exists, and further the dialogue of dance as therapeutic for individuals with special needs, advocating for dance/movement therapists to be teaching community and therapeutic dance classes.

Theoretical Orientation

For this case record review, as a dance/movement therapist I used my own felt body experience (Fischman, 2009) and intuition, defined as, “as “the rapid thought that happens outside of conscious awareness” (Winerman, 2005, p. 50) to attune to the clients I was working with to inform my clinical lens. I used my body, and my felt body experience to connect with others using an inter-subjective relationship (Fischman, 2009) in order to integrate my own experience in relationship to those I am working with. This combination of intuition and felt body experience guide the creation of movement directives and choices for clients, which I used to bring them to a more holistic place of wellness, and to foster the healing process. I strongly believe in the power of movement, as well as “the nature of the creative act...and the manner in which it may constructively be fostered” (Rogers, 1989, p. 347) through dance/movement therapy for each individual client or group I come into contact with. I trust in, and believe in, the

use of the symbolism of movement, as shown through movement in the body as a form of communication of inner emotion and ideas (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1979, p. 79).

Marian Chace, pioneer of dance/movement therapy, facilitated therapeutic movement relationships with her clients “by visually and kinesthetically perceiving the patient’s movement expressions” while in session, and would sometimes “reflect, expand or complete” a client’s movement in an effort to communicate and bond with a client beyond the use of words (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1979, p. 78-80). Chaiklin and Schmais (1979) emphasized that the dance/movement therapist uses their own body and own felt experience. As a dance/movement therapist, I look for ways that I too may connect with my clients non-verbally, allowing myself to be guided by their own movements in order to further create interventions and ways of expanding their expressive abilities.

I also firmly believe in the power of Rogers’ (1975) understanding of empathy, that “involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person” (p. 3). This may not be a typical definition of empathy, and I would like to acknowledge many exist. Based on Rogers’ (1975) definition, I think that as a dance movement therapist, I may be sensitive to a person not only emotionally but also physically, watching and being present with the changes that occur through their entire being. I especially believe in empathic reflection, described by Sandel (1978) as one way a therapist fosters connection between themselves and clients by creating a “nonjudgmental, supportive environment which is conducive to sharing and growth”, and that this connection is created and responded to “spontaneously and intuitively” by the therapist (p. 98). I believe that in using my natural tendency to be empathic, I may facilitate a positive, nonjudgmental, creative environment, wherein healing and growth can be promoted through movement.

My experiences as a dance educator have primarily been informed by the studio structures I have and continue to work for. The goal of the private dance studio, in which this review took place, is to foster students with well-rounded foundations of technique, style, genre, as well as equal emphasis on performative and creative exploration. I also strongly connect with and use principles set out by dance education pioneers such as Margaret H'Doubler (1992) and Anna Halprin (1992). I aim to “recognize and respect the similarities: movement skill, craftsmanship, organization, respect for the body, its range, and limitations, the ‘mind-body connection’” (Mertz & Harris, 2002, p.131). Halprin (1992) was referring to the parallels that can and often do exist between creative dance and dance/movement therapy.

My chosen paths of movement had never converged in this way before. I seemed to know so many others in the field of dance/movement therapy who also taught dance. How did they seem to separate the roles so clearly? Did they? Was I missing something? I began to look into the literature and found minimal published literature about dance/movement therapists who also teach dance, though it seems many of us share our love for movement by engaging ourselves in both roles of dance educator and dance/movement therapist. While there is dance education literature for students with special needs, there is less existing in regards to dance/movement therapists teaching classes for students with special needs.

My thesis developed out of this curiosity about how I was using my movement backgrounds and if I could add the body of dance/movement therapy literature, by sharing how my movement backgrounds converged to create a dance class for students with special needs. My personal knowledge in dance education and in dance/movement therapy helped to shape how this study was created, and conducted. I wanted to clearly determine how my fields of study influenced, added intention, and shaped a dance class for students with special needs.

Chapter II: Literature Review

My interest in discovering how my skills as a dance/movement therapist informed my decisions in teaching a dance class for students with special needs motivated this literature review. Specifically, dance education and dance/movement therapy, as well as the benefits of dance and dance/movement therapy for students/individuals with special needs, were reviewed. I chose to explore selected values of both dance education and dance/movement therapy that I naturally aligned with. These included how dance educators and dance/movement therapists foster their environments and relationships with their students, as well as how creative exploration can be emphasized. These values encompassed my beliefs about working with both clients and students and have impacted the way I understood both my role as a professional in these two fields as well as my relationship to them in these professional identities. The sources within this literature review also share an open and ambiguous language, which leaves them approachable in their direct application to students with special needs, individuals who are differently abled, but also to students without neurodevelopmental delays or challenges, as well. These neurodevelopmental delays can be categorized as impairments in academic, occupational, personal or social abilities and functioning (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 2013). Similarly, the sources reflect ways in which dance/movement therapists may work with children with special needs are referenced from early in the inception of the field, and it should be noted that many developments have been made over the years. This review is organized to mirror the trajectory of my own career development, and in the pathway that this study was formed. I was first a dancer, than a dance educator who craved a more accurate language and direction for how I was engaging in movement with individuals with special needs.

As a growing dance/movement therapist, I returned to working with individuals with special needs with an informed vocabulary and knowledge, resulting in this case review.

Influencing Values of Dance Education

Dance education is a field of study with a multitude of theories, theorists, frameworks and pioneers. Dance educators may be employed in educational settings that may range in age from early education to high school, can include secondary education, conservatories, studio settings, community and recreation centers, and many more. In this literature review, frameworks adapted and created by educators of inclusive dance classrooms are identified. Inclusive classrooms are settings for students with and without disabilities, which can prompt participation for all individuals on a spectrum of ability level (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015). These inclusive settings can allow for inclusion for each student in the class, and promote positive perceptions of dance ability and disability for all students (Zitomer & Reid, 2011).

Dance educators have the responsibility to create an opportunity for their students that encourages learning “through the use of the body in motion,” while in their dance classes (Zitomer & Reid, 2011, p. 139). Margaret H’Doubler (1957), a pioneer in formal dance education, discussed frameworks for education and for dance, concluding, “that dance be experienced as an adequate means of expression, so that when the movements of the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual natures are coordinated with the activities of the body, there will result an expression that is vital and dynamic” (p. 10). Karen McShane-Hellenbrand (2008), a student of the H’Doubler teaching tradition and philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, highlighted that expression can be at the forefront of a student’s own learning experience. A dance educator can emphasize the student’s creative expression by inviting them to integrate

their kinesthetic and cognitive experiences and awarenesses in order to generate meaningful responses (McShane-Hellenbrand, 2008, p. 141).

H'Doubler's emphasis of dance as an integrative art form of the body/mind connection in the physical and expressive learning process (McShane-Hellenbrand, 2008) is echoed by dance educator Anne Green Gilbert (1997). Green Gilbert (1997) reiterates that benefits gained in dance and movement classes can be utilized outside of the dance class setting. Problem solving skills, gaining and expanding movement vocabulary verbally and physically, and gaining body and kinesthetic awareness are possible through dance education (Green Gilbert, 1997; H'Doubler, 2002; McShane-Hellenbrand, 2008). These are important skills for all students in a dance class setting. Emphasizing individual development of these skills throughout expressive and creative movement experiences can be more accessible for students with special needs.

Anna Halprin (2002), a dance educator who also explored dance as a healing art, founded the Tamalpa Institute in 1978, an educational center which offers "movement-based expressive arts therapy training and art-based, somatic movement therapy training program" (Tamalpa Institute, n.d. para. 1). In reference for teaching dance for children, Halprin (2002) emphasized the flexibility a dance instructor needs, as the teacher can and should pick up nonverbal cues from their students in order to continue structuring every class as it's own separate experience (Mertz & Halprin, 2002). To clarify how each dance class can be a creative experience, McCarthy-Brown (2009) emphasized the need for dance educators to use paradigms that are well-rounded, influenced from a diverse set of sources and backgrounds. In offering variety, the dance educator "serves not simply to deposit movement vocabulary into students' movement vernacular, but to co-construct a dance that values the individual's own movement style" (p. 122). McCarthy-Brown (2002) also encourages educators to create "a unique classroom culture"

for all students who enter, and to engage with the students at their styles and levels of communications so that they may feel welcomed, which encourages them to engage (McCarthy-Brown, 2009, p. 124).

Dinold and Zitomer (2015) discussed a holistic approach in inclusive concepts for teaching dance in inclusive settings. An inclusive dance setting, as described by Dinold and Zitomer (2015) “encourages participation opportunities for individuals of all abilities” (p. 45). This holistic approach states that an individual is viewed based on the mind/body connection, and it is emphasized within an inclusive dance class setting from this approach that each student is viewed in their capacity to interact based on their “physical, emotional, symbolic and cognitive” capacities and context. The student is seen as a whole child, rather than exclusively on dance technique abilities. In allowing holistic integration, that is, integration of the entire being in an emotional, physical and cognitive sense (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015) in combination with self-expression of the individual; dance students may be further guided into their own self-expression and development. Dance classes can offer separate experiences of further self-exploration, and expanded self-expression (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015). These separate experiences can then elicit further exploration of self, and expanded self-expression. Students will be engaged in each unique class they experience, which Halprin (2004) says is necessary to elicit enthusiasm and passionate involvement from students (p. 107).

Roles of The Dance Educator

Dance educators may take on many roles while teaching dance, including eliciting student expression, creative exploration and engagement in the educational setting. These elements of a dance class and educator role can be approached in different ways, for various

populations. It is important to note that dance and dance classes for children are the central population being referenced for the dance and dance educator roles in this section.

Edward C. Warburton (2004) studied the theoretical frameworks of dance and education for the most effective ways a teacher could interact with students, narrowing in on the idea of care within the dance class. Warburton (2004) cited authors, theories, and philosophers like Piaget, John Dewey, and behaviorist and feminist theories to find where care in the dance education setting originated and existed. His findings concluded that the concept of care is fluid, constantly shifting in the space where teaching is being done (Warburton, 2004). Just as Halprin (2004) described, dance teachers as needing to establish classroom atmospheres that are sociable and understanding for children, Warburton stated from his findings that care was about a willingness to engage, and allowing two people to meet together honestly (2004, p. 20). From this, Warburton concluded it is also the dance educator's responsibility to be aware of when these caring moments happen and when students are developmentally ready and prepared for them. Also, it is their responsibility to be aware of and care for a "student's long-term intellectual, emotional, and physical growth" (Warburton, 2004, p. 93).

In an effort to decipher how a dance educator can best serve students in their guiding role, Andrzejewski (2009) defined holistic dance teacher preparation as being an option with which "teachers, and presumably their future students as well, can benefit from a focus on the whole person" (p. 25). Within her discussion, Andrzejewski (2009) spoke to the different facets of professional identity a dance teacher holds and embodies. These identities included: professional, teacher, dancer, and dancer teacher (Andrzejewski, 2009). Of note, Andrzejewski (2009) stated,

...dance teachers mirror the interrelationship of education and dance, and they view teaching and dance principles as mutually important and influential aspects of one another. This manifests in distinct identities as dancers and teachers as well as integrated identities as dancer teachers. (2009, p.20)

As Warburton described responsibility and care for dance educators to integrate different facets of the student's readiness and personality into the classroom, Andrzejewski (2009) applied the same integration for dance educator, into their approach of teaching. Andrzejewski (2009) outlined methods in which dance educators can approach their classes and students, beginning with the dance educator's own education. Andrzejewski's (2009) philosophy of holism as an approach to dance teacher education included how an educator designs their curricula, course lessons, and individual activities (p.21). The dance student's instructor, who also integrates facets of their own identity and development, models integration of self for the students.

By fostering holistic integration and self-expression of the individual, dance students may be further guided into their own self-expression and development. As Halprin (2002) stressed, creative experiences should be open for freedom of interpretation by the students. If a dance instructor with a caring, open attitude is aware of and integrates the instructor's own development into their teaching styles, they can more effectively guide these creative explorations. As a result, all students of dance with ranging degrees in ability have a larger opportunity for increased confidence in themselves, their abilities, and in their movements as modeled by their dance educators.

Dance Education and Special Education

It has been established that movement is beneficial and important for learning and development in all children (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015). But what about students who are

differently abled? Students with special needs may also benefit from dance as a learning tool (Anderson & Rastegari, 2017). Most of the literature explored in this section of the review focuses solely on students with Down syndrome (DS) in dance classes, or in inclusive dance class settings, which include students with and without disabilities (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Down syndrome (DS) is a well-researched population with dance and dance education; therefore, was used as the primary special needs diagnosis for this literature review.

Students with special needs, specifically DS, have a different learning style than students in dance classes who do not have a neurodevelopmental delay or challenge; thus they may require different teaching methods in order to be introduced to ways of self-expression, interaction with others, and motor skill attainment (Jobling, 1994; Kassing & Jay, 2003). Researchers Jobling, Virji-Babul, and Nicols (2006) explored how students with DS experienced pleasure in movement and in dance classes. Jobling et al. (2006) defined Down syndrome and its unique needs. The authors, Jobling et al. (2006) shared that there is less information about how to best adapt physical activity programs for students with Down syndrome, and how to increase their potential for involvement within these settings. Jobling et al. (2006) also utilized Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as a taxonomy for describing the movement of young children with DS, as well as using the framework to expand the children's current movement functioning (Jobling, et al.2006).

Educators have found that the LMA taxonomy categories of Body, Effort, and Space are effective frameworks for helping children with DS expand their movement repertoire and potential for movement expression (Bales, 2006; Jobling et al. 2006). Jobling et al. (2006) found that teaching Laban Movement Analysis language to the students with DS helped them to better understand their own movement, as well as their movement in relationship to others. The LMA

taxonomy allows for the offering of opportunities for the children to increase body awareness and utilize their visual learning for acquiring skills. With this new and added vocabulary from the LMA taxonomy, the dance class focuses on the mover's unique abilities and capabilities versus their perceived inabilities (Jobling et al. 2006). The LMA language in use with dance students with DS also provides for the dance and movement exercises to keep their spirit, spontaneous nature and experimental opportunities in the learning process, normalizing their experiences and enriching their growing self-development (Jobling et al, 2006). Students are able to increase their own learning, and increase relationships to others in movement and movement activities.

Fostering Peer Relationships

Within an inclusive dance class setting, or a class specifically designed for students with special needs, it is particularly important to establish peer relationships. Anne Green Gilbert (2014), outlined many lesson plans for teaching dance to all students, including instructions for students with special needs and who were differently abled. According to Green Gilbert (2014), one way of including relationship to others within the classroom setting is to revisit and explore the Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity. Hackney (2002) outlined the "Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity, as breath, core-distal, head-tail, upper-lower, body-half, and cross-lateral, as movement patterns necessary for all humans to be fully functioning, moving, communicative beings (p. 13). These movement patterns each are evolved from Rudolf Laban and one of his students, Irmgard Bartenieff's work, and signify and replicate early developmental experiences (Hackney, 2002, p. 13). In exploring the inner workings of self, the mind and body are able to reach out to others and to the environment (Bartenieff & Lewis, 2002). Green Gilbert (2014) encourages revisiting and using these patterns with partner

activities to help students with developmental disabilities find ways of relating their own bodies to those around them.

Students with Down syndrome, or other special needs have these capabilities as well; they just need teaching methods in which to learn the skills for creating relationship to other and to expand their own expression and creativity. Green Gilbert (2014) specifies that students with DS may need extra stimulation for their vestibular systems. Because of their natural learning style, she also encourages repeated movement patterns, spins for vestibular activation, improvisational dancing, and inclusion of props to dance classes for this population (Green Gilbert, 2014, p.19). Landalf (n.d.) also expressed that repetition can give children “a sense of familiarity and success,” allowing a greater sense of understanding each time an activity or movement is repeated between classes. When combining familiar movements to new challenges, the class can be a safe and exciting environment (Landalf, n.d.).

It is important to recognize that the literature in this section does not specifically include children in dance education with special needs other than Down syndrome. There is limited dance education literature about other diagnoses with special needs, including but not limited to behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and other physical limitations. Students with varying degrees of developmental needs, not only DS, may require a range of approaches to promote creativity and self-expression. These concepts and knowledge may be interpreted and translated into curriculums on an inclusive level across the special needs population; however, the literature is lacking and has not previously addressed a wide-reaching level of inclusivity.

Influencing Values of Dance/Movement Therapy

Dance/movement therapists encourage the creative expression of each individual, emphasizing inner and outer expression (Bartenieff & Lewis, 2002). Fran Levy (1988), a

dance/movement therapist, examined the inception and historical evolution of dance/movement therapy and its connection to early modern dance. In her explanation of how pioneers of dance/movement therapy developed the therapeutic use of movement in a search for greater meaning and self-reflection, she explained, “It was not enough however, to simply add emotional content to the movement. It was necessary to connect the personal expression of the dancer to more universal insight about the human condition” (Levy, 1988, p. 16). Levy (1988) explained that artists continued searching for ways to deepen their performances for themselves, and for the audiences watching, ultimately to develop their artistry on a personal and universal level. Dance/movement therapy pioneers Marian Chace and Mary Whitehouse began their careers as dancers, connecting their performance backgrounds to the therapeutic potential of movement. Their search for integration of self in their art form of dance led them to the use of movement and dance as forms of communication, creativity and exploration and, as a foundation of communication of the human experience (Levy, 1988).

As early modern dancers continued to question and search for development of their work, they began to recognize the ways in which dance was therapeutic. Martha Schwieters chronicled the beginning career stages of dance/movement therapy pioneer Marian Chace. Schwieters (1984) added that Chace herself was also a part of the growing changes in the work of modern dance, “Chace appreciated and learned how to move freely in the world of ideas. She acquired factual knowledge and technical expertise, ideas and attitudes that shaped the rest of her professional life” (p. 10). After further professional and personal development, Chace taught movement and dance classes, some of which developed into classes for students with special needs, leading to her career as spearhead of dance/movement therapy at St. Elizabeth’s hospital (Schwieters, 1984; Chaiklin & Schmais, 1979). Marian Chace is the epitome of a developed

dancer who questioned, was curious, and used movement to look at develop her own personal growth and development. Schwieters illustrated Chace's capacity for these dance/movement therapy values by saying:

Chace's complete dedication to her chosen art form, dance, became more selfless as she advanced in age. It had first been an outlet for the expression of her own ideas and feelings. It was her wholehearted and unwavering dedication to her art, enriched through a sensitivity to the people and events with which she came into contact, that enabled her to evolve a new facet of dance...Chace's development into a therapeutic person was truly an extension of her artistic growth. She reached a junction where the performing and societal directions of her art intersected (1984, p. 11).

To further the discussion about the evolution of dancer to therapist, Joanna G. Harris (2001), a dance/movement therapist who studied H'Doubler's dance education model, created an introspective essay about her own personal development. Within the essay, Harris identifies Barbara Mettler's emphasis that dancers and therapists alike need to be well informed about creative dance and therapy respectfully (Harris, 2001, p. 130). Furthermore,

"...they might recognize and respect the similarities: movement skill, craftsmanship, organization, respect for the body, its range, and limitations, the 'mind-body connection,' and above all, the creativity necessary to make both effective experiences ..." (Mertz & Harris, 2002, p. 131).

Harris (2004) also stated that through creative dance is how a child, can rediscover the pleasure of exploratory movement through creative dance. Harris' work, and those of many other therapists mentioned in her essay, worked with children to rediscover their own bodies through movement (Mertz & Harris, 2002). Just as H'Doubler encouraged her students to seek a

dance education which could simultaneously add to their growth and afford them opportunities to explore their own creative ideas, (Mertz & Harris, 2002), dance/movement therapists and dance educators alike seek to facilitate a similar self-development of their students and clients.

Irmgard Bartenieff (2002) highlighted that, for dance/movement therapists, dance can offer, “stabilizing structures within which the moments of subjective expressiveness can occur autonomously and fully, with a simultaneous internal and external relationship” (p. 144). This subjective expressiveness experienced through movement and dance sparked a curiosity to develop a greater sense of connection and community through exploratory movement. Through their paralleled development, and integration of the self and other, the art forms of dance, dance education, and dance/movement therapy are intertwined historically, and in current application.

Dance/Movement Therapy with the Special Needs Population

This section focuses on dance/movement therapists working with individuals with special needs, referenced as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or a record of such an impairment, or is perceived by others to have such an impairment” (A Guide to Disability Rights Laws, 2009). Dance/movement therapists have been working with children with varying needs and who are differently abled since inception of the field in the 1940s (Levy, 1988, p. 221). This work can cover facilitating dance/movement therapy sessions with individuals, specifically in this section with children, with a variety of diagnoses and special needs, not limited to Down syndrome. Many dance/movement therapists have focused their efforts with this population to meet their communication needs, often exploring non-verbal communication.

Beth Kalish-Weiss (1968), a dance/movement therapist, detailed the ways in which a dance/movement therapist must meet children with this diagnoses at their own physical and

psychological and developmental capacities. In order to effectively work with children with autism, Kalish-Weiss determined that dance/movement therapists need to first be aware of their own body and movement repertoire, including their own movement nuances and essences, so that they may be able to accurately match the child on a level where movement interventions can be introduced (Levy, 1988). Levy (1988) shared what Kalish-Weiss determined to be requirements for a dance/movement therapist:

1) to observe the child's non-verbal communications; 2) to know his/her own non-verbal communications; and 3) to find a point at which his/her own body movements can communicate with the child's body movement, hence promoting communication and interaction on a movement level (p. 223).

Awareness and knowledge of the self and other, identified by dance/movement therapists reflects Chace's idea of empathic connection and relationship with clients, which dance/movement therapists need for meeting all clients (Sandal, 1978, p. 99). The dance/movement therapist uses their own body to match the child and their spontaneous movement and expressions, in order to facilitate exploration of the body and environment (Sandal, 1978, p. 98). This is done by the therapist mirroring the child in their own movement qualities and essences, non-verbally communicating with the child (Levy, 1988, p. 223). Similarly, Suzi Tortora (2006) stated that nonverbal interaction with focus on communication is "considered self-expression, and they become the building blocks for improvement and acquisition of communication" (p. 193). Tortora (2006) also acknowledged that the child leads these connections and exchanges, and it is the responsibility of the therapist to assess, notice, and adapt to best support the child in their movement and communication.

Marcia Leventhal (1979) also explored dance/movement therapy with children who had developmental, emotional and learning disabilities. Leventhal (1979) determined that dance/movement therapists' work with children with special needs related to the previously mentioned diagnoses should be focused on appropriateness of movement sequencing and special attention to the child or group's developmental levels and progress (Levy, 1988, p. 228). Similar to Kalish-Weiss, Leventhal (1979) suggests the dance/movement therapist needs to establish formatting and movement boundaries verbally and non-verbally. Boundaries may include group guidelines for safety, when and in what order activities occur with the group, and timing and spatial boundaries for participants, which foster and allow each child to be appreciated and guided to move independently. This independence increases self-mastery of movement and motivates exploration of self and the environment, creating a positive self-concept (Levy, 1988). The concept of a consistently structured group can be helpful in implementing cohesiveness and invitation, advocating for an atmosphere of belonging among the group (Landolf, n.d.; Levy, 1988).

To create a welcoming environment in a dance/movement therapy group for children with special needs, Polk (1974) suggests that the group highlight inclusivity. To do this, the group should include creative movement activities with challenges without creating competition so the children can increase self-mastery and confidence independently within a group setting (Polk, 1974). Creative exercises in a dance class setting can have emotional and social benefits for the students (Green Gilbert, n.d.). The purposeful introduction and use of props, musical instruments, and music into the session are to promote communication as well as to highlight a feeling of joy when creating educational and instructional guides through movement interventions (Polk, 1974, p. 58).

To further elaborate on the use of music and rhythm in dance/movement therapy for children with special needs, Tortora (2006) suggests that music can assist a child in sharing their self-expression on a physical level without words. Tortora implies that rhythm and music can also be created with the mover's own body, including the use of voice. It is important for the therapist to be aware of how their own voice through the use of sounds, level, and tone can be used to facilitate these rhythmic and movement interactions for the client, particularly those with limited verbal expression (2006, p. 292). Tortora's emphasis on rhythm and vocal exploration can expand a child's view of self, furthering their communication style. Combined with other creative movement and rhythmic exercises, a child or individual with special needs, and particularly with communication limitations can be benefited by working with dance/movement therapists.

These are just a few techniques to be considered when working with children in a dance/movement therapy setting, with attention to the special needs population. The responsibilities of the therapist to offer structure and to assess the physical and psychological developmental needs of their client are of noticeable importance. Independent exploration foster exploration of self, environment, and other are created using movement through the dance/movement therapist's offering of structured activities. These activities may include props, rhythm, music, and should be introduced throughout in an inviting atmosphere.

Integration of Dance Education and Dance/Movement Therapy for Individuals with Special Needs

Dance education and dance/movement therapy as fields have approached students and clients of varying special needs with a multitude of approaches. Susan Imus (2014) clearly defined the roles of dance educator and dance/movement therapist as distinct and separate,

emphasizing that a dance educator uses a directive approach with students, and a dance/movement therapist will create a reciprocal movement relationship. Imus (2014) reiterated that while both professions use movement to create and foster expression, dance/movement therapists exist in and foster a movement relationship with their clients to deepen emotional understanding. Though these roles are separate, each may facilitate movement using similar methods and techniques. Downey and Imus (2013) emphasized that dance educators must assess their student's abilities in order to construct a class which will help meet the learning and movement goals of the class.

Zitomer and Reid (2011) posed the conceptual difference that differently abled children or children with disabilities seen in dance classes are often considered or seen to be in dance therapy, as opposed to their non-disabled peers. Dinold and Zitomer (2015) shared several pedagogical concepts for teaching an inclusion-based dance class, which invites participation for all abilities. Among these concepts for inclusivity include an encouraging teaching approach that fosters relationship between all students, as well as a focus on psychomotor, rhythmic, and musical activities. Dinold and Zitomer (2015) suggested using Green Gilbert's (1992) core dance elements, such as Space, Time, and Force. Dinold and Zitomer (2015) shared that using these dance elements can encourage positive social interactions between all students through collaborative movement activities in groups or in pairs. The constant use of these structures and/or activities are emphasized so that the students become familiar with, and can adjust or anticipate the structure of the class (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015). Morris, Baldeon, and Scheuneman (2015) also emphasized that consistency in classroom structure is imperative in inclusive dance classes. Morris et al (2015) share that this philosophy should include classroom offering and content, teachers, and extend to communication with students and caregivers (p.

127). Albin (2016) reiterated the facilitator and/or movement professional leading a program for individuals with special needs should be consistent, as this can be essential to developing trust with participants (p. 60). Albin (2016) shared that as long as the environment is a positive one, a movement program for individuals with special needs can be beneficial.

Laura Downey considered the roles of dance educator and dance/movement therapist in a case study in which she sought to distinguish if a class for students with special needs she was teaching should be considered therapy. Downey (2013) established goals for the students and class, such as acquiring new dance and locomotive skills, and fostering relationships in an environment outside of the structured therapeutic setting (Downey, 2013). Downey (2013) discussed that in order to meet these goals effectively, offering choice to the students was imperative to meeting the goals of the group, and for each individual student participating in the class. Downey shared the class was an effective experience for her students due to her use dance/movement therapy informed techniques including assessment tools, and relationship building with her students, done using verbal and non-verbal cues and tools. Downey also emphasized the class was informed and focused on the students versus a set dance curriculum. Finally, the class was not about power in her roles as dance educator or therapist, but more about the students.

In a review of benefits of dance/movement therapy for students with Down syndrome, Albin (2016) detailed that several concepts used by a dance/movement therapist could be implemented into other therapeutic or dance class settings for individuals with DS,

“the dance therapist and dance educator can develop a reciprocal relationship to maximize a child’s individual growth. Each professional can share strategies...no matter

what the ability level, movement stimulates the sensorimotor connection in the body, which is healthy for everyone” (2016, p. 61).

Like Downey (2013), Albin (2016) believed that the training and skillsets of each profession, dance educator and dance/movement therapist, could add beneficial strategies and recommendations for this unique population.

At this time, there seems to be a minimal amount of literature by dance/movement therapists who also serve as dance educators to students with special needs. Many dance/movement therapists teach dance or work in community programs that encourage dance/movement skill mastery, but there is a lacking body of literature contributing to the field of dance/movement therapy. Within the literature, there are some sources that considered the Down syndrome population and the benefits of dance/movement therapy, dance education, and inclusive dance education for both children and adults. However, where the literature appears to be lacking is in the larger scope of special needs and differently abled individuals, and what other diagnoses or unique behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and/or physical symptoms or conditions can be considered in the special needs realm.

Conclusion

My guiding questions for this study were developed out of my need to clarify how my knowledge as a dance/movement therapist influenced my facilitation of a dance class for students with special needs. My experience in dance education and dance/movement therapy had motivated me to work with the special needs population, but I wanted to be clear and intentional in working with the special needs population through Friday Night Dance Party. How am I utilizing my knowledge in dance/movement therapy methods and dance education methods to teach a community dance class for students with special needs? And, in what ways

do my knowledge in dance/movement therapy methods and dance education methods integrate through the teaching of a community dance class for students with special needs? I wanted to further explore how my knowledge in both fields could effectively support my teaching of this class. I was also curious about which field of experience, dance education or dance/movement therapy I would be leaning on the most to influencing my teaching. Would my pools of knowledge integrate? Would they overlap? How would I know?

Chapter III: Methods

Methodology

A pragmatic case record review, including qualitative methods of data collection was used for this study. I chose this methodology because it most accurately fit within the timeline of completing my graduate studies and schedule of the dance studio. By using historical, qualitative data in this single-case design within a bounded system, I discovered what was unique about this particular case using multiple sources of information.

Creswell (2014) emphasizes that there is freedom to select what is used for data collection and analysis in case studies, which allows the researcher choice in what kind of data answers the research questions. This methodology also encourages multiple truths rather than adhering to one philosophical school of thought. This study was a stepping-stone towards continued recognition of my professional development, including professional identity and roles of dance educator and dance/movement therapist. In alignment with these discoveries, I found myself connecting with Creswell's (2014) statement that "truth is what works at the time" (p. 40). This statement allowed me openness and freedom in my research process. At the time of conducting this review I knew I was developing and learning so much about myself as a dance/movement therapist and even still as a dance educator, despite having the most experience in that role. Creswell's (2014) statement gave me the openness to know that I could return to teach FNDP at another time, more informed, and if I conducted a similar process, that truth would also work. My truth was developing, just as I was, with an openness and freedom to explore and solidify. I also appreciated having flexibility and freedom in the types of data I collected, and did not feel limited in their platforms. I counterbalanced this openness and freedom by working with a validation consultant to solidify themes from my data, from which I

created my dance performance and choreography. The answers to my research questions were unique to my situation, and relatable to where I was as a learning dance/movement therapist and established dance educator.

It was important to me to not feel limited or restricted from where within my data I gathered my themes when it came to my analysis process. There was not a pre-determined 'yes' or 'no' being answered in my research questions, and I wanted the results of this study to be able to emerge naturally and organically, like the creation of Friday Night Dance Party. My own development as a professional has been an ongoing process, and the procedure needed to occur similarly. The truth of my results would be accurate only for the exact timing of this study, as a reviewed case of my experience of teaching FNDP. If I were to replicate this study again, my knowledge and frameworks would be different based solely on time and experience. This bounded study allowed me to create and construct a unique truth.

In using three data sources from FNDP classes, I had options and multiple lenses with which to view my own process. This created opportunities to reflect and stretch my own creativity while recording data. As a clinician and dance educator, I enjoy offering choice in the direction of a session, or class for my students and clients respectfully. I find that offering choice is an empowering way to connect to and establish trust with individuals; this also allows for students' and client's personal creativity to be ignited and brought to the surface. By choosing to apply the same concepts of freedom, creativity and choice in my own research process, I was echoing for myself the same process I offer to others.

This class provided me with the opportunity to better understand my professional development and role definition, as it relates to my own scope of practice and experience. I

wanted to understand how I was utilizing my skill sets and if they overlapped. I was curious about how and what I was doing, for students with special needs in a community dance class.

Data Generation

Friday Night Dance Party took place at a private dance studio in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. All data were collected on site at the dance studio once all participants departed and the studio space was locked for the evening. All data were previously created in an effort of personal discovery for my professional growth, and was later used for this review. Data were recorded and collected from nine classes, and three types of data were analyzed for this review. The first type of data was a reflection sheet (see Appendix C), the second was art making, and the third was stream of consciousness journaling.

In designing the reflection sheet, I chose to visually divide a piece of paper into two halves representing dance/movement therapy on one side and dance education on the other. At the end of each class, I reflected on the 45-minute class and documented where I felt each part of class had been motivated from, either dance education influences or dance/movement therapy influences. This process included documenting the class in the order of activities that occurred during class. I delineated these activities into the dance education or dance/movement therapy sections of the paper based on how I felt I had approached them. The reflection sheet portion of data collection served as a guideline to create my visual art making and journaling from. It was often a quickly constructed document that allowed me to record what occurred within the class, and to indicate any events, situations, or moments of importance. If I felt I could not choose, or was not able to differentiate completely between the dance movement therapy or dance education influence, I drew an arrow between both or wrote a horizontal line over my vertical division line.

Visual art making served to help me further understand which method informed my class on that particular day. Sometimes my artwork was based on my reflection sheet and sometimes it was a separate process that helped to reflect on the class in a different medium. This artwork was created with graph paper and markers, occurring after the reflection sheet data collection. I chose this form of data collection to provide another medium to understand my process of teaching Friday Night Dance Party. Creating visual art also became a process where I was able to allow myself another form of expression of my experience.

The process for stream of consciousness journaling included allowing myself to write any thoughts and feelings about the class in general. These journal entries often included physical sensations I experienced while teaching, insecurities I felt about teaching the class, or moments/interactions that had occurred between the students or myself. Also included within the journals were moments or activities that I felt were successful and wanted to repeat in future classes. Journaling was the final piece of data collected in all data collection sessions, occurring after the reflection sheet and visual art making. Following the reflection sheet, the visual art and journals were completed at the studio, in time frames of five to twenty minutes.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was completed at my residence, and all data it was kept in a locked desk drawer when not being used. A within-case analysis (Creswell, 2014) was used for theme analysis of this case record review. This very focused strategy allowed me use historical data collected from the class, and conduct my theme analysis at the end of July 2017. I used my data sets to determine themes of when, how, and if the influences of dance/movement therapy and dance education appear throughout the class. This analysis method was used on three sets of

historical data recorded from three classes. Theme analysis helped me to determine if the methods used in the class integrated, combined, or stayed distinctly separate.

Validation Strategies

Once data analysis was completed, I used Creswell's (2014) recommendation of triangulation for validation. Defined as "examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes", this strategy provided me the chance to view the multiple sources of my data from my three classes and justify the themes found (Creswell, 2014, p. 251). My reflection sheet, visual artwork and journaling all reflected similarities. The most salient similarity between the three included some linear representation: the visual representation of horizontal lines across my division line in my reflection sheet, my visual artwork often included linear structures, and my journaling tended to include run-on and un-ending sentencing.

I also worked with a validation consultant who had knowledge and experience in dance/movement therapy and dance education to validate the themes that emerged from my data analysis. The role of my validation consultant was that of a combination of a peer debriefing role and an external auditor (Creswell, 2014). I communicated with a colleague, who studied dance/movement therapy and is the current director of dance at a dance studio in northern Illinois, to be my validation consultant. My consultant and I worked to ensure validity between the themes derived from my data analysis. The intended result of this validation was to guide the creative process of choreographing and creating a dance piece to demonstrate the findings from my review to ensure my research and results would "resonate with people other than the researcher" (Creswell, 2014, p, 252). My validation consultant and I worked together for two, 30-minute meetings to discuss the themes gathered from my analysis process. Our meetings focused on bridging my findings from my visual artwork, journaling and reflective, qualitative

data into movement. The validation consultant meetings were structured to ensure my choreography, song selection, and even the title of my piece, “Many Truths,” was congruent with the findings. This was done by my consultant asking questions about my data and theme analysis, including the accuracy of the relationship between my research questions and my data (Creswell, 2014). A primary consideration for my validation consultant and I was ensuring the intention behind the choreography and movement stayed true to relaying these themes as they pertain to my professional identity development within the study. My consultant and I worked in these meetings to clarify my choreography and communicate through this dance performance how my dance/movement therapist self and dance educator self informed each other through the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party.

Chapter IV: Results & Discussion

The purpose of this case study was to gain a better understanding of how my knowledge of dance/movement therapy influenced my facilitation of a dance class for students with special needs. I was also interested in exploring how and when the influences of dance education and dance/movement therapy intersected and informed one another within the teaching of FNDP. From this process, my professional identity development was brought into question, and I began to realize this case review was also an attempt to understand my professional identity.

This entire process resulted in the conclusion that I use influences from dance education and dance/movement therapy simultaneously, which I termed, expressly interinvolved. This term loosely satisfied my inquiry of how my knowledge pools mingled.

Expressly: for the express purpose: particularly, specifically (Expressly, (n.d.), para. 1).

Intervolved: to involve or roll up within another (Intervolved, (n.d.), para. 1).

I worked with my validation consultant to conclude that my data represented both dance education and dance/movement therapy influences within the facilitation of Friday Night Dance Party simultaneously and nearly equally. All three types of data included dance education and dance/movement therapy references and/or representations in varying forms, and in ways that I felt were interconnected and in tandem with one another. My validation consultant and I worked with the created phrase expressly interinvolved to clarify the choreography for my dance performance.

The creation of the phrase expressly interinvolved helped to define the ways I was utilizing my knowledge and experiences in dance education and dance/movement therapy to teach a dance class for students with special needs. My guiding question of how did my knowledge of dance/movement therapy influence my facilitation of a dance class for students with special

needs was answered by the following four themes: staying grounded within my own body through the use of breath, offering a flexible structure with choice in the dance classroom, my informed intuition, and improvisation.

Validation Consultation and Choreography

My intention for performing my research results came from the need to demonstrate the lived experience of my research, my teaching, my exploration, and my growth. This performance needed to be the representation of the many truths my theme analysis brought me, and to be my living graphic of my study. The dance and choreography explored the bridging of gaps between and made space for holding and using my knowledge of both dance education and dance/movement therapy in teaching FNDP and also in any other professional settings where I was employed.

Staging Elements

During my validation consultant meetings, my validation consultant and I questioned how I would communicate my four themes on the stage through everything from costuming, lighting, music choice and, most importantly, choreography. The largest component we worked to clarify was to communicate to the audience the initial separation of dance/movement therapy methods and dance education methods visibly on the stage. I chose to start this by representing the pools of knowledge of dance educator and dance/movement therapist as sides of the stage, separated by one diagonal of white light. This clear diagonal of light later dissolved as the choreography moved and merged the divided areas of the stage together into one. The elimination of the light during the piece symbolically represented for the merging of identities, as well as for the inclusion of both frameworks to exist equally.

The costuming and song choice were selected almost concurrently. The costume needed to move swiftly and with ease, while keeping the structure of my body and movements clear. I did not want anything distracting from my body or the choreography, in order to best showcase the differences in style and movement between the sides of stage, which also represented dance educator self and dance/movement therapist self. The chosen costume was a dress I already owned. The color was bright which felt appropriate for the music and overall mood of the piece. The final selection of an orange dress with a fitted bodice and loose, A-line skirt that dropped down to the knees allowed for free movement of my entire body. The color choice was purposeful, bright, and contrasting to the lighting choices made for the stage, which were minimal and neutral.

The music choice needed to feel joyful! This entire process, from the generation of FNDP, to every single Friday night 'Shake It Off!' ending of class, to the creation of my choreography and validation meetings. I needed the music to represent that same feeling of joy I hoped to foster in every single FNDP class for my students. The artist, Petit Biscuit, is work I have been familiar with for a long time, and whose work I greatly enjoy for the open qualities of his music and the electronic background. The remix of an original Petit Biscuit song felt the most apt for mood, as well as timing of the piece. "Sunset Lover" (Petit Biscuit, 2015) is a song that for me resonates images of warmth and happiness. The remix I chose added nuance I felt conveyed joy, which was necessary for the audience to feel, and for myself to attune with in order to perform the piece. In addition, the fact that the song was a newer rendition of a familiar one felt extremely appropriate for what I was presenting: myself, but a relearned edition complete with new information and with additional wisdom of my integrative identity as both a dance educator and dance/movement therapist.

Choreography as Related to Themes

The choreography of this piece was ultimately shaped by each of the four themes generated from my research. This section displays my exploration and solidification of these themes, how those themes helped to answer my guiding questions, and how the choreography helped to solidify and ultimately represent them. My validation consultant worked with me to clarify my movement intention. I wanted to be clear that the purpose of this dance was to encapsulate the beautiful journey of Friday Night Dance Party, and to deliver that message with the use of my four themes in movement throughout the piece as a whole.

Theme One: Staying Grounded Through the Use of Breath

As Friday Night Dance Party began to take shape and become a reality, many stressful factors were present in my life at the same time. This class took place at the end of what often felt like a long week of graduate classes, clinical placement/internship at a behavioral health hospital, and teaching other dance classes on the weekends. By the time I reached 6:30 p.m. on Friday evenings, I often felt emotionally, mentally and physically fatigued. In order to prepare myself, I arrived at the studio a few minutes early to just simply take a few deep breaths before the class began. This served as a moment to gather my energy, in order to be able to fully engage and be ready for my students and their class.

My use of breath was as a way of gathering my energy, centering myself, and grounding myself. To feel grounded before class was to feel completely connected to and aware of how I was feeling in that moment, emotionally, mentally, and physically. As referenced by Hackney (2002), to feel grounded is to have a table sense to oneself (p. 41). For FNDP, to feel grounded, I was aware of my experiences and was able to still engage in my role of dance educator with my students. I feel that this first theme is tied most directly to my training as a dance/movement

therapist, and was a direct correlation to that use of knowledge and professional identity. While not unique to dance/movement therapists, staying grounded through the use of breath in order to maintain my presence was a skill learned through my dance/movement therapy training. Hackney (2002) called the process and practice of being aware of breath and breathing as “tuning in” to the breath. Hackney (2002) stated that we can intentionally choose to alter our breath, allowing it to “be an ally in any desired approach to change” (p. 52) such as the change in my attitude and focus to be back on my students, and not on my own needs in the moment. I also noted in my journals a repeated use of breathing into my belly, and a horizontal expansion into my lungs and rib cage. As a natural stance, I tend to hold onto my hips with my hands when talking/teaching in a dance classroom setting. Throughout the progression of FNDP, I began to raise my hands so they rested on my lower ribs, or even one hand on my belly. This became a tactile and kinesthetic reminder to “bring attention to that area through breath and touch,” (Hackney, 2002, p. 53) allowing me to further tune into my breath, at any given moment while teaching. These areas became grounding points for me, to check in with myself, to see if I was feeling tired, fatigued, worried, stressed. Was I in my own worries and not truly being with my students? If I just took a breath or placed a hand to my belly or ribs while teaching, I could sync my breathing to the thoughts of “be here, be with.” This small motto became entwined with my breath and the idea of staying grounded while teaching FNDP, and repeated itself throughout my reviewed data sets.

The use of breath, and staying grounded is a skill that both dancers and dance movement therapists use for very different and similar reasons. Kalish-Weiss (1968) described an emphasis of the dance/movement therapist needing to be aware of their own movement preferences and essences before working with individuals with autism, by needing to be present, so that the child

can felt seen and be held in relationship with the therapist. My journal entries reflect that breath would often come into play throughout the class, and not simply as a preparing action but as a sustaining action as well. One example that illustrates this is:

...one student just laid on the floor while we were going over a chassé ball change. No matter my encouragement, questions, prompts, anything, she just lay there. I'm going over in my head about her muscle issues and her affect stuff, but like, holy moly what do I do? And I am staring at myself in the mirror FREAKING OUT but trying to still teach a chassé ball change but engage her by calling her name... Her mom comes in to tell her, 'Okay, we're going home', and they left class early tonight. Whew, deep breath. Snap. Out. Of. It. You've got two other students ready to chassé ball change their little hearts out. GO. BREATHE. BREATHE. BREATHE.

I was aware that in order to be fully prepared, and in order to be fully present so that I could engage with my students, I needed to be grounded. To be fully present was to be in the current moment, aware of my students and myself, in order to remain available to them as their teacher. Being present allows for connection and relationship to be formed with my students, and clients alike. For my fullest movement repertoire to be available and to best match and mirror the movements of my students in guiding their activities, I needed to stay activated in and grounded in, meaning connected to my awareness of self, through my use of breath.

Hackney (2002) explained that breath is the first Fundamental Pattern of Total Body Connectivity an infant experiences. Breathing as a developmental pattern of movement can support physiological functions, and to increase ease in movement (Hackney, 2002, p. 41). It is from the development, exploration, and process of tuning into the breath that an individual can increase awareness of themselves. A dance/movement therapist can empathically engage with

their clients, create and communicate in nonverbal dialogue when they are being present. My student was only able to communicate to me, to her peers, to her mother, non-verbally in that moment. That moment was simultaneously very loud and very silent in its subtlety. This form of communication was all that was available at the time, and I had to do everything within my power to stay connected in relationship to all of my students, and also to myself in order to remain present.

Hackney (2002) references the use of breath as a tool for connection and empathy, "...you do not have to give up yourself to be with someone else. This has important implications for all relationships, but is especially crucial in the therapist/client or teacher/student interactions" (p. 60). It was imperative that I be able to communicate and be accessible to my students throughout class, without losing my own self. Through the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party, I was observing and questioning how I was engaging with my students. Tuning into my breath allowed me to observe that I was serving in a non-therapeutic role. I utilized the grounding tool of breath from my dance/movement therapy training in order to create and maintain empathic and connected relationships founded in movement with my students.

Choreographic Representation of Staying Grounded Through the Use of Breath

In a way that now feels ironic, the most prominent placement of choreographic representation of my use of breath, particularly in the use of kinesthetic feedback or touch to my physical body, is at the end of my performance. I ended the piece by bringing one hand to my belly, and one hand to my chest. This ending position comes after nearly four minutes of constant upper limb fluidity and exploration, finishing the dance piece in stillness. In constructing this choreography and theme, I found myself pulled to the core-distal connectivity. Hackney (2002) described this connectivity as giving the opportunity "...to locate our own

individual center for organizing movement” (p. 68), and it increases our exploration of our entire self and physical body, what is our own and what is not as we move in the world. I strongly related to this example and connectivity to the ways I need to remind myself, through breath to be present for my students and not to be overwhelmed by my own thoughts of doubt or worry. I was also exploring in my body what anxieties or tensions were my own, being a young adult woman with a hectic, full, schedule, and what were the energies my students were bringing into the dance classroom with. How was I differentiating? I was at least attempting to do so through breath. These attempts are also captured in the choreography in quick bursts of jumps and dips into low-level lunges. These dynamic changes help to present how I was exploring my space, finding what was mine, what my body was capable of, in the same ways I was offering to my students. Hackney (2002) offered that this connectivity also affords an individual the ability of coming into the self, and going out to the other (p. 71). This relates to relationship of self and other, how I was engaging with myself through breath, and to my students. From my dance/movement therapy training, I was able to discover how to further develop my relationship to my breath, and to the breath developmental movement pattern. In doing so, I was able to discover the interrelated relationship I had with my students. There was an ongoing oscillation between checking in, tuning into my internal sense of self, and my external sense of my students. The use of the core-distal connectivity in conjunction with my grounding breath and motto to “be here, be with” afforded me the chance, over and over again, re-establish and remind myself what I was experiencing in my body as my own, and ways to stay grounded and to stay present.

Theme Two: Offering Flexible Class Structure and Choice

Offering choice was a theme I had a gut feeling would be in my final results from the beginning of my thesis inception. I knew from working in previous settings with individuals

with special needs and who are differently abled that it would serve me well to have a class structure with options, back up plans, and maybe to let go of any preconceived notion of a plan. There are many factors to be considered when structuring a class for students with special needs, and each class should have an individual and group focus (Albin, 2016, p. 59). This theme captures the use of how the structure of FNDP was informed by both dance education and dance/movement in the following ways.

My education in dance/movement therapy has led me to focus on being with my participants, to focus less on an agenda for my sessions/groups. As a dance/movement therapist, I use of the description of presence as detailed by Fischer and Chaiklin (1975) that to be with a client and to use my presence is “a skill to be used purposefully and with intent toward objectives, as any other movement process” (p. 139). With this definition, each dance/movement therapy group or session I facilitate is uniquely informed by the individuals I am working with and their unique needs, and any particular session may never be exactly repeated.

Dance/movement therapists are “present in offering suggestions and using one’s body in reflective movement” in session, and may adjust their level of intervention and suggestion to their client’s movement (Fischer & Chaiklin, 1975, p.140). With the students of Friday Night Dance Party, I made sure to individually include each student within group activities, and always did my best to be fully present with each of them, as well as a collective class of students. As a dance educator, I tend to have to have a consistent, repeatable structure that is followed weekly in my classes. There is some flexibility, but my students typically know what to expect every week and in what order during class. I wanted to maintain this approach to FNDP in order to offer consistent structure while being sure to add new elements of movement and creative exploration to maintain engagement from my students. In maintaining a consistent structure, I

felt most connected to the line of work I had more experience in, dance education. My familiarity and experience in dance education provided the structure and background of which to create FNDP. By being present with my students, flexibility was added into the class structure as my students began to engage and explore within the movement activities of the dance class.

In an exploration of her own teaching style of dance/movement therapy, educator Jessica Young described relating her experience of being aware of her own movement qualities and preferences into her teaching style to graduate students in a dance/movement therapy program. Young (2012) shared that “they [educators] must take into consideration that students enter their classrooms with a variety of learning styles...The unique personalities of students also shape their learning processes” (p. 142). To me, this quote can be adapted to any learning environment. As a dance/movement therapy student, I was teaching FNDP from an educated and aware place of my body and choices, I wanted to afford my students the same or similar opportunities for exploration. How would I be doing this? Would it be from the lens of dance/movement therapist? Or from the lens of dance educator? Downey (2013), a dance/movement therapist, similarly questioned the structure of her own community dance class for students with special needs, “Rather than creating a pre-established curriculum with a particular linear sequence, I create a very fluid curriculum,” which she found was often informed by the students themselves through both non-verbal and verbal cues (Downey & Imus, 2013, p. 8). I needed to offer flexibility within the class schedule to allow for movement discovery to happen. I realized I had installed anchors of dance education structure into FNDP, but was further guided by my own body-awareness and training to shape them for the class and for my students.

From my journal entries, this became clear through the repeated use of the word “choice,” or “dancer’s choice.” Dinold and Zitomer (2015) suggested several methods dance educators could use to make their dance classes more inclusive for students with and without disabilities, including “having students bring in their choice of music for the warm up, or providing students with an activity schedule that allows them to anticipate the activities” (p. 48). It was this exact way that the FNDP ending ritual was creating in the first class, by me asking what song would the students like to play freeze dance to? I had a few queued and ready, but it was very quickly clear that “Shake it Off” (Swift, 2014, track 6) was the favorite song. By asking for their direct input and choice, the students facilitated and created their own class ending that would be repeated throughout every single class. Similar to Downey’s (2013) discovery that she was allowing the students of her class to have the power in the class by offering choice, and not placing it within her own self and roles of educator or therapist, I too was allowing the students freedom in their creativity. Allowing choice provided the students power within the class, and further emphasized their creative exploration and expression.

I realized I had installed consistency as a structure of dance education into FNDP but with a dance/movement therapy informed body-awareness to them. Lewis and Schmais (1975) describe Marian Chace’s goals of dance/movement therapy as including activities, which integrate the body and its parts. This can be done in a variety of ways between therapist and clients, primarily through activities which emphasize the organization of, grounding and reflecting of the body to create a sense of wholeness and good feeling (p. 146). I began to gain an awareness of my class structure and consistencies as influenced by dance/movement therapy goals, such as Chace’s organization of the body.

One such example is after taking attendance, we put on our Dancing Bodies before beginning various warm-up and across the floor activities. The Dancing Body was a ritual I created to engage body awareness of the students by having them touch, and verbally identify body parts, vaguely or specifically, such as Dancing Brain, Dancing Heart, Dancing Smiles, Dancing Tummy, Dancing Arms, etc. Albin (2016) shares that activities that are simple, which can be repeatable can be useful for continued movement development (p. 60). The Dancing Body is an activity in which the had the chance to develop a repeatable exercise for themselves. The FNNDP students often offered and added their own creative names or identified body parts and/or areas each week. I also ended each class, (after our quickly infamous Shake It Off ending which parents were always invited to join in on) with a similar structure. We practiced a Thank You routine to end class by saying Thank You: to our dancing bodies with a hug, to our dancing friends, with a hug or wave, to Miss Shauna, with a hug or wave if the students felt like it, and to whoever brought you to class tonight, with a hug or a wave. The involvement of touch within Thank You routine was always guided by the student's level of comfort, taking into consideration if the student had a sensory issue and/or boundary they had established. This often included students who did not want to be hugged due to it overwhelming them on a sensory level, or to students who preferred only to hug at the end of class, and not to receive touch at any other point in class. This was my way of incorporating dance class etiquette into the class structure. Green Gilbert (2014) emphasized that it is important for students to have moments within classes to recognize their efforts and bodies as tools of expression with a positive regard. These select structures were moments where each student was afforded these opportunities within the group setting. The Dancing Bodies and Thank You routines of Friday Night Dance Party began as options informed from my own experiences in dance education and

dance/movement therapy, choices I was giving myself to explore within the class. These routines became a part of our consistent class structure through the choice of the Friday Night Dance Party students.

Class structure is where I began to notice I was infusing both dance education and dance/movement therapy structures equally into my teaching of FNNDP. My anchors of structure to begin and end each class highlighted my incorporation of both influences dance education and dance/movement therapy. The Dancing Body exercise at the beginning of class illustrated how I used my dance education experience to offer and guide the students through a movement-focused warm-up while simultaneously offering a dance/movement therapy informed exploration. The Dancing Body ritual offered students the chance to explore their own bodies in a guided exercise, with the freedom to add and improvise within the structure. Our closing Thank You routine also demonstrated and emphasized individual expression and learning of my students. This routine also provided the students with a chance to end the class with recognition of their own movement mastery, and created group/class structure the students could look forward to. Baldeon et al, (2015) emphasize that each student in an inclusive dance program should be encouraged to apply themselves to the primary concepts of movement and movement activities, in their own ways (p. 123). This is similar to how the Dancing Body exercise offered the FNNDP students to share their experience, in identifying their own body parts. In including consistent dance education structures of beginning and ending routines within the FNNDP class, the structures allowed students to foster and create relationships with one another, which continued to enforce the established class goals of Friday Night Dance Party.

The theme of offering flexible class structure and choice solidified that I used both influences and my knowledge in dance education and dance/movement therapy simultaneously

within the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party. The structures referenced were informed by my experience, knowledge and training in both frameworks. My training in dance/movement therapy helped customize the dance education structures I implemented into FNDP to meet the needs of my students at their various learning styles and processes (Young, 2012). I facilitated these structures informed by my students and their requests to meet the FNDP class goals, tailoring them to each student and each class.

Choreographic Representation of Offering Flexible Class Structure and Choice

One way I attempted to demonstrate choice and flexibility was with the use of the white diagonal light dividing the stage at the beginning of the piece. Nearly the first minute of the choreography is my representation of exploring these two sides, and using my own choices of methods based in dance/movement therapy or dance education to facilitate FNDP. I sometimes “tip toed” the line of light, and explore the separation visible on the stage in expansive movements to display offering choice to students and myself. The dissolving of the light was the fundamental symbol of complete flexibility. Not differentiating boundaries within the moment, but enjoying the movement, enjoying what is created, and becoming grateful for what movement my body is capable. With the division of light removed, the space available for movement exploration is also expanded. As the music began to crescendo, my movement began to grow and lengthen, reaching farther out in space, before collecting and connecting back to my core self, and checking in with my breath. The intermixing of roles of dance educator and dance/movement therapist became clear in my offering of flexible class structure and choice, most clearly in my beginning and ending of FNDP classes.

Theme Three: Use of Informed Intuition

Informed intuition as a theme developed from moments often gathered from my visual artwork, when in reflecting and creating, I felt there was no true rhyme or reason for me having chosen that activity or having offered that choice. My answer was that it simply felt right in the moment. I established my desire to offer flexibility in structure for my students, but at times I was unable to decipher just how or when I made that choice. Best detailed by Lea Winerman (2005), intuition exists as “the rapid thought that happens outside of conscious awareness” (p. 50). This definition feels most accurate for how quickly I made decisions during my 45-minute class, and how it is demonstrated within the Reflection Sheet. It can be seen (Appendix C) that the class and my outlines jump over the division between dance/movement therapy and dance education very quickly and in close succession. This intuitive decision-making process, described by Winerman (2005) as “something mystical, even a little magical,” (p. 50) is strongly reflected in a visual representation of my data (Appendix D).

In reflection of the data, as well as my lived experience, I made choices and working based on my student’s needs or requests. One example of this was when my students requested to use props, such as wands and crowns in the class, while in the middle of doing another structured activity. In that moment, rather than sticking with the structure or routine previously established or the technical dance focus of the moment, that request turned into an improvisational dance opportunity for the students. I invited them to explore different ways they could move while balancing the crowns on their head, or different ways they could move their wands or with what body parts? In looking back, my intuition told me to follow the student’s request. Using skills from my dance/movement therapy training such as improvisation allowed me the opportunity to create that space and activity for them, continuing to move towards established class goals. These goals included encourage dance technique mastery, promoting

creativity, and to foster social relationships between the students. These improvisational opportunities which were able to be created based on my intuition to follow the students allowed these goals to further be reached. The use of improvisation as a dance/movement therapy informed method in this circumstance allowed me to continue staying present with my students. Improvisation afforded me the chance to listen to my students and create an exploratory movement opportunity of their choosing. I chose to forego the established structure of continuing to learn our dance routine of technique and dance steps in order to encourage and cheer on their creativity as they presented it to me in the moment.

This choice to move past the technical routine of class and to encourage my student's in their exploration furthered the development towards reaching the goals of Friday Night Dance Party. The goals of FNDP were still met, and I was able to recognize the flexibility in how those goals could be achieved by the students. In allowing my students time to freely explore their movement and dancing, I was able to witness their authentic creativity, and their investigation into their own bodies.

This moment was also an example of when I felt very emotionally attached to my students in witnessing their exploration of movement, their bodies, what they were creating for themselves. Had I not allowed myself to listen to my intuition, or to have listened or attuned to what my students were asking, I am not sure my relationships with my students would have been created in the same way. Carl Rogers (1980) discussed intuition and the relationships it may help to foster. Rogers described his own experience as, "I may behave in strange and impulsive ways...ways which I cannot justify rationally...Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger" (1980, p. 129). I, too, feel that my relationships with my students were often based on and strengthened in moments of intuition. From their exploration of balance

and movement exploration with props, we naturally transitioned into finding ways to Say Goodbye with our bodies, an extension of the exploration, just without the props. This seamlessly connected to our ritual of ending class with “Shake It Off” and other ending routines that connected the students to one another, and me in saying goodbye and thank you. This particular class floated away so quickly and timelessly almost without effort, and my memory of this class is strong, vivid, and clear. Yet my decision and choice to change course and direction of the class from where we had been, in learning and reviewing a sequence of technical dance steps, to switching to exploratory and improvisational movements is less vivid, but the felt memory within my body is still strong and clear.

In retrospect, I acknowledge that the decisions I made in FNPD were informed by my experiences and values in dance education and dance/movement therapy. However, at the time of teaching FNPD, I recognized this as only acting on intuition. Social psychologist David G. Myers (2007) refers to intuition as “effortless, immediate, unreasoned sense of truth” (p.158), and the moments from the FNPD class described in this section were informed from my intuition, as well my experiences and education as dance educator, and most strongly, as dance/movement therapist. Studies have shown that intuition, and “thinking off stage” (Myers, 2007, p. 160) can have intuitive capacities in a multitude of cognitive processes including, “automatic processing...instant emotions, non-verbal communications, implicit attitudes and creativity” (Meyers, 2007, p. 160). From Myers’ (2007) explanation of intuition, my experiences of working with individuals with special needs carried into my experiences of being a dance educator, and dance movement therapist. My informed intuition allowed me to make decisions for the class structure of Friday Night Dance Party.

One example of my use of my informed intuition was to know when to move on from continuing to learn our dance sequence and routine. Taken from my experience as a dance educator, rather than to push my students through their feelings of not being motivated, I was able to acknowledge when my they were no longer engaging in the learning process of the movement. From an assessment point of view, as informed by my dance/movement therapy training, I was cued into my student's bodies visually seeing their disengagement from the activity, and watching them fully and dynamically express their interest into something else nearly completely unrelated. Myers (2007) shares "the mind is quick, agile, perceptive," (p. 163) and I believe this is how I was able to make decisions within my class for students with special needs. I was in the moment, fully present with them, and able to recognize when an activity was no longer being used to meet a class goal or when my students were losing interest. However, it was my informed intuition that furthered the opportunity of movement discoveries for my students from their initial request, and allowed me to offer continued exploration to foster their own creativity.

Choreographic Representation of Use of Informed Intuition

Myers (2007) stated that, "creativity builds upon intuitive expertise," (p. 165). As a dancer and artist, this definition resonated with the idea of improvisational movement and moving upon impulse. In order to represent intuition within my dance performance, I chose to leave spots open for this exact type of exploration, so that each night, and each show would be unique, different, and special in its own way. Whatever would 'feel right' in the moment, would be the truth of that dance and that performance. For me, intuition also tends to feel invisible, a power or sense I cannot grasp or see. To display this factor, I was very purposeful to use my visual gaze and explore the wide space of the stage, as well as reach out into the audience, to

connect with them and bring them into this very relational process and experience. I also chose to find moments where my fingers moved delicately, as if finding and tapping into a tangible element that I was experiencing as my use of intuition.

Theme Four: Improvisation

I feel the themes staying grounded through the use of breath, offering flexible class structure and choice, and the use of my informed intuition became the foundation of my final theme, improvisation. I feel that it was because of my own self-awareness in needing to stay grounded through breath, in wanting and choosing to offer flexibility and choice, and ultimately listening to my intuition when in class with my students, that improvisation was offered in each class, and was able to be a central focus of each Friday Night Dance Party. There were goals, structure, hopes and intentions for each student of the class, but the present, current, moment became the essential footing of Friday Night Dance Party. Improvisation is a visible aspect within each of the preceding themes. My breath, and how and when I used it to stay grounded was done in an improvisational manner, and offering flexibility within the class structure to meet each student required improvisation. Lastly, in order to be connected to my informed intuition, I needed to be aware of and follow my assessment and knowledge tools quickly as the information presented it self, in order to make an informed decision.

As a dance educator I approached FNDP with curriculum focus, set up with expectations and guidelines for my students. These included expected etiquette and behavior for safety for each student and the class as a whole. Movement curriculum goals also included learning short movement sequences and routines to perform for the dancer's families. As a dance/movement therapist, I knew an improvisational element would be necessary within the class in order to meet my students who were entering the movement setting with a variety of needs to be considered.

In order to meet those needs effectively for each individual and the group as a whole, I needed to adjust the movement curriculum on a class-by-class, or sometimes even moment-to-moment basis.

In my experience of teaching dance, I have always attempted to encourage and instill a sense of enjoyment and fun within my classes. Dance educator and curriculum designer Brenda Pugh McCrutch (2006) states that “skill is secondary only to joy in dance...each dance lesson should have as one of its goals to enable students to experience the joy of dancing” (p. 141). From creative movement classes for young children, to higher-level technique classes for older adolescents, I have always attempted to remind my students that dancing is fun, can be fun, and should feel pleasurable and good within the body. I have never had a solitary goal or focus on technical dance achievement, though the pursuit of movement advancement and progression is always a goal of the classes I teach. In order to maintain this idea of fun and enjoyment, flexibility and improvisation is necessary. These concepts are encapsulated within the dance class setting by allowing spontaneous creativity to occur. Improvisational movement can be produced from prompting, but also from an individual’s own movement exploration. In the teaching of FNDP, I was learning that curricula may shift and change, continuously inviting my use of improvisation with my students and ability to shift to their skills and needs. In my work as a dance/movement therapist, I also try to encourage similar moments of joy and/or enjoyment through the work. Therapy may not be a joyful experience, and I acknowledge the contradiction being presented. As a dance/movement therapist, I will ask clients to move and explore movements to find ways to create a “sense of good feeling and wholeness,” (Fischer & Chaiklin, 1975, p. 146), within themselves, and I have found that this also carried over into my teaching of FNDP.

Improvisation particularly appeared in the warm-up portion of each class where students were each asked contribute a movement for the class to try on and repeat for themselves. The movements were then modeled for the class, and often expanded and explored further by their peers, or I often prompted this exploration. Here I was directly combining my influences and experiences of dance education to foster and facilitate the joy of movement during their class, and encouraging relationships between the students, further meeting class goals of FNDP. Susan Sandel (1978) shared that a dance/movement therapist uses empathic reflection “by which the dance therapist incorporates clients’ spontaneous expressions into the ongoing movement experiences and responds to those expressions in an empathic way” (p. 98). This reflection and movement relationship was a part of each Friday Night Dance Party but was not used within a therapeutic setting. Sandel (1978) elaborates that empathic reflection can be used to gather information, engage clients with the therapist as well as other group members, and to create a “sense of mutuality which facilitates the communication and sharing of feelings” (p. 101). My application of empathic reflection with my students, in the non-therapy setting of Friday Night Dance Party is additional example of how my dance/movement therapy education influenced my facilitation of the class. My identity in that moment to my students was as their dance educator, but had an influence directly tied to my experience as a dance/movement therapist. I was utilizing my assessment skills and knowledge as a dance/movement therapist in the very beginning of each class in order to establish trust and relationship with each student, as well as to foster a sense of group cohesiveness. My ability to continuously assess each student, and the class as a whole throughout each FNDP experience allowed for improvisation to occur. These improvisational opportunities within FNDP invited creativity and exploration, shaping the class and experiences for each student, allowing the class goals to continue being met. As a dance

educator, I may have been using dance education methods to structure the class, but I allowed improvisation to expand the movement and expression of each student and the class as a whole. As a dance/movement therapist, improvisational moments require assessment to determine which interventions may be appropriate for the client, based on their needs in the moment. As an educator, assessing the improvisation of my students allowed me to take a directive approach to facilitate creative movement activities towards meeting the class goals. It was the overlapping of skills of dance educator and dance/movement therapist that made Friday Night Dance Party a unique experience.

Choreographic Representation of Improvisation

As a dance/movement therapy student at Columbia College Chicago, I was trained to take in the full individual, to acknowledge and honor their body, mind, and spirit. One way as a therapist I pick up on cues from my clients and adjust to them is by attuning to their affect. How do they look? What is their body saying? As the facilitator of FNNDP, I did my best to do this with my students as well. Within establishing an empathic relationship with my students by responding to their creativity and expression throughout the use of improvisation, joy was often found throughout Friday Night Dance Party. I will truthfully admit this was my own joy, and what I attribute to as noticeable moments and representations of joy in my students' affect. After one class I wrote, "I can see their large and full bright smiles that carry upwards into their eyes and lift their bodies off the ground as they leap and swirl with their ribbons and balance with their princess crowns as the most majestic young dancers I've ever seen". I felt the need to include improvisation and the aspect of joy into my choreography as a vital aspect of my living graphic. Friday Night Dance Party would not have been an experience with such rich relationships with my students had improvisation not been allowed throughout the each class, or

throughout the entire process. My own joy often led to me dancing with the students of Friday Night Dance Party, especially during our closing Shake It Off ritual. The shared spontaneous creative expression facilitated a mutual sense of joy, and joy of movement. Dance/movement therapists utilize this connection and bi-directional relationship to create and shared material to further develop a client's work and the rapport between therapist and client. I was able to utilize this skillset outside of a therapy setting, and into FNDP.

The best way for me to include improvisation and joy into my thesis performance was to share and show the same affect I wrote about my students displaying, as I danced. As the music played throughout the piece, I rejoiced in the unified purposes that dance/movement therapy and dance education methods have served to me. I smiled, and I even giggled during the performance as I pulled my own joy from the movement, and the memories of my students and their movement and enjoyment of movement to my consciousness while performing. The moment in the piece where the light diminishes from sight as the division between dance educator and dance/movement therapist is where the improvised section of movement was placed. I chose this placement to uniquely identify my use of improvisation as both dance educator and dance/movement therapist. Dancing as an art was the first guiding light that led me to both roles I hold as dance educator and as dance/movement therapist. There is so much joy I do personally hold in both of those careers, and the final breath and energetic smile that ends "Many Truths" demonstrated how these fields were joyfully intertwined, and expressly interwoven.

Scope of Practice

The progression of dancer, to dance educator, to dance/movement therapist was a natural one for many of the pioneers of both fields, dance education and dance/movement therapy, and I

found myself as another dancer and mover following in their footsteps. The bridging position of dance educator seems to also serve as a divide, creating boundaries for scope of practice and for the safety of students and instructors alike. Students, differently abled and/or with special needs have a different learning style than most students in dance classes and, therefore, require different teaching methods to meet their needs and be introduced to ways of self-expression and relation to others.

Imus (2016) discussed that dance/movement therapists use their knowledge in dance and movement to effectively foster a patient's creativity while utilizing movement directives. This can be done using a range of approaches, including: therapeutic, aesthetic, recreational, educational, rehabilitative, and psychotherapeutic (Imus, 2016). All of these approaches include using an arts related activity but do not always include the creative process (Imus, 2016). From Imus' (2016) use of a dance/movement therapist's scope of practice, I feel that my skill sets as a dance educator and dance/movement therapist most accurately fit into the therapeutic, aesthetic, and recreational ranges. My students were fully encouraged to be engaged in the dance class, which I consider to be the arts related activity; this establishes the therapeutic approach from Imus' (2016) range of approaches and scope of practice view. I was teaching my students in ways of art making to express and communicate and perhaps for performance (Imus, 2016), allowing my approaches to FNDP to also be considered from Imus' (2016) aesthetic approach. Finally, as stated in the recreational approach of the scope of practice, Friday Night Dance Party provided opportunities that, "develops arts structures and rituals for increasing enjoyment and enhancing socialization" (Imus, 2016).

However, because of my training in a master's program for dance/movement therapy and counseling, and my previous experience and training in dance and dance education, my range

was larger than this. As dance/movement therapists, Imus (2014) shares that dance/movement therapists “are the only dancers trained to do therapy”. As a dancer and dance educator, I was able to utilize my skills from my dance/movement therapy training and pull them forward into Friday Night Dance Party and move along the full continuum to bring therapeutic art into a community setting. I was able to establish and use a “reciprocal movement relationship” as described by Imus (2014), a skill that as dance/movement therapist I use for assessment and intervention, to enhance the art making experience for the students of Friday Night Dance party. This bi-directional movement relationship allowed for creativity and exploration among the students, and for the class goals to be further developed and met throughout the course of the class. My training as a dancer, artist, educator and therapist allowed me to appropriately teach therapeutic dance in a 45-minute, weekly community dance class for students with special needs.

Professional Identity

Friday Night Dance Party, a community dance class for students with special needs began as a 45-minute, therapeutic, cultural arts engagement experience once a week. Friday Night Dance Party quickly turned into the highlight of my week, it also turned a spotlight onto my professional identity development. I had been a dance teacher for several years, and I had worked with individuals with special needs for several years, and I was also a growing dance/movement therapist and counselor. How did all of these roles fit together? How did FNDP impact me professionally? Gibson, Dollarhide, and Moss (2010) define professional identity development for counselors as, “The successful integration of personal attributes and professional training in the context of a professional community,” (p. 23-24). Which professional community was I fitting in as I was teaching this class? Which role was I taking on while teaching FNDP? Was I my therapist self while teaching young students with special

needs? Or was I my dance teacher self, teaching an adaptive movement class? This review and process afforded me the opportunity to dive in and realize that I was all of the above. I was expressly involved in my roles, combining my experiences, personal values professional trainings and educational backgrounds.

Through all forms of data, my dance educator and dance/movement therapist training were nearly equally represented. Albin (2016) shared that movement based programs for children with and without special needs (primarily Down syndrome) can be extremely benefitted by the use of both a dance educator and dance/movement therapist, “Therefore by collaborating with each other, a more comprehensive view of the child’s life and behaviors can be seen,” (p. 61). In using Imus’ (2016) scope of practice and range of approaches view of a dance/movement therapist, I feel I was using the full scope of my practice as a dance educator and dance/movement therapist to best meet the needs of my students. As a student in a dance/movement therapy and counseling program, I had the training to navigate and work along the entire continuum, teaching a therapeutic dance class to encourage art as therapeutic. My data represented that I was engaging and utilizing my knowledge from dance education and dance/movement therapy to facilitate Friday Night Dance Party.

In using Imus’ scope of practice reference, and in relationship to Albin’s (2016) suggestion that that movement based programs for children with and without special needs (primarily Down syndrome) can benefit from the collaboration of a dance educator and dance/movement therapist, Friday Night Dance Party was a culmination of my skill sets and knowledge from both fields. I was able to make decisions within Friday Night Dance Party to maintain the goals of each class, and to maintain my role as dance educator to my students. My knowledge in both dance education and dance/movement therapy informed me and guided me to

maintain safe ethical boundaries to ensure that the work remained therapeutic and that I did not engage in therapy with my students.

Navigating my roles along the continuum of my scope of practice was apparent within each theme deducted from my case study. My use of breath can be attributed to each role as dancer, dance educator and dance movement therapist. All roles encourage the use of breath to facilitate and expand movement, and I found that the use of breath helped me to stay grounded, to stay present and to stay with my students throughout the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party. Offering flexibility and choice within the class setting to meet the needs of my students fluctuates along the continuum in educator and therapist roles. I chose to and made a conscious effort to meet my students in every present moment. In consideration to my informed intuition, I felt guided to each role throughout specific moments in the class. My assessment skills gained from my dance/movement training led me to these inclinations that I attributed to intuition. This area is the most gray along the continuum, as intuition is a non-verbal, intangible aspect of my process. Finally, improvisation exists within each of the preceding themes, and along the entire continuum. Friday Night Dance Party is an example of therapeutic art, which I was able to facilitate using my knowledge and experience in both dance education and dance/movement therapy.

By using both of my sets of skills, backgrounds and education and personal values in dance education and dance/movement therapy to teach Friday Night Dance Party, I have come to realize that my own professional identity development is still underway, and will continue to be as I evolve as a therapist and an educator. My experiences will continue to shift and morph. However, this experience: working with young adolescent students with special needs in a community dance class, has become a pivotal fixture in my timeline. This experience continues

to impact me as I continue to teach dance, and I continue to work as a dance/movement therapist. I continue to be reminded and informed as a dance educator to be mindful of each student's uniqueness and learning style in my classrooms, and I make an effort to pay more attention to my students on an individual basis as well as maintaining whole class goals and structures. As a dance/movement therapist, I am reminded that movement is my primary modality for communicating with clients, and I work to be better in tune with their various modes of communication.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case was to gain a better understanding of how my knowledge of dance/movement therapy influenced my facilitation of a dance class for students with special needs. I also wanted to further understand, how and when the influences of dance education and dance/movement therapy intersected and possibly informed one another within the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party. From this process, my professional identity development was brought into question, and I began to realize this case review was also an attempt to grasp onto my professional identity.

The experience, timing and exact situated-ness of Friday Night Dance Party was distinctive, and perhaps not repeatable. For future research, I may be able to more acutely structure and create inclusive dance classes and/or curriculums from this experience. What is notable for my study is that I am not the only dance/movement therapist and dance educator, or movement informed individual teaching dance for students with special needs. There are examples of professionals in a variety of fields including physical and occupational therapy that incorporate the introduction of dance into a therapy setting (Albin, 2016). In conjunction, I had a difficult time defining the special needs population as it pertained to the students of FNDP.

There seems to be a lack of consensus across the psychological field, or even in the adaptive and inclusive dance class setting research. This study calls to attention the vagueness and lack of fluidity and congruency in defining special and unique needs. Most of the sources I was able to find and use were detailing the use of adaptive dance programs with individuals and children specifically with Down syndrome. Though individuals with Down syndrome may share other unique abilities and needs as others, the definition of special needs is still lacking in expansion and seems very vague.

This case review resulted in the conclusion that through the teaching of Friday Night Dance Party, a dance class for students with special needs, I used influences, knowledge and values of both dance education and dance/movement therapy simultaneously. The concurrent use of dance education and dance/movement therapy influences, knowledge and values was captioned as expressly interinvolved. This phrase was created after themes of: staying grounded through the use of breath, offering flexible class structure and choice, use of my intuition, and joy as the central focus of Friday Night Dance Party, were established. I have concluded that I was expressly interinvolved in my roles, combining my communities, personal attributes and values, and my professional trainings and educational backgrounds. Although Friday Night Dance Party is no longer a running class, the conclusions gathered from this case review and from the students of the class continue to inform my professional identity development as both dance educator and dance/movement therapist. I am continuously diving headfirst into discovering how I am informed from both fields of dance education and dance/movement therapy. I maintain both identities, as dance educator and dance/movement therapist and continue to bring others into movement and orbit with me, in both professions.

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Appendix A. Key Terms

Dance Educator- An individual who can “act as a guide in providing an environment that challenges and stimulates dancers to achieve their highest level of mastery and at the same time inspires dancers to honor the body” (Mainwaring & Krasnow, 2010).

Dance/Movement Therapist- A clinician who is either registered or board certified by the American Dance Therapy Association, and, in the practice of psychotherapy, places an emphasis on movement as a form of communication of emotions, ideas, and self-expression (Chaiklin & Schmais, 1979, p. 79).

Friday Night Dance Party (FNDP)- This specific class is a cultural arts community dance class catered to a community setting which does not have an extensive amount of recreational dance classes for individuals with special needs. This class offers students opportunities to explore their bodies in a safe setting, use their imagination and creativity in both individual and group activities organized with their unique needs in mind. Props, music, dance technique and free style movement and games are included in the general structure of each class. FNDP is open to students of all ages, genders, and ethnicities, with any behavioral, cognitive, emotional or physical special need. The students of this class specifically are students who typically function at a cognitive level lower than their chronological age, have some motor functioning impairment (which may include motor assistance tools; i.e. canes, or a walker), speech impairment and other sensory issues.

Students of Friday Night Dance Party – Students of FNDP were individuals who had a special need, defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as:

“a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or a record of such an impairment, or is perceived by others to have such an impairment,” (“A Guide to Disability Rights Laws, 2009).

Appendix B.
Invitation to Validation Consultant

Hello,

My name is Shauna Shrewsbury and I am a second year dance/movement therapy and counseling student at Columbia College Chicago. I am currently working on my Master's thesis that is aimed at discovering the ways in which I am using my backgrounds in dance education and dance/movement therapy to teach a community dance class for students with special needs. Additionally, this thesis process is providing the opportunity for me to explore my own professional identity and development both as a clinician and dance educator. I am writing to request that you provide assistance in the validation process of this work. This would involve going over the data analysis I have conducted and the themes that I have identified through theme analysis of my three forms of data. My ultimate goal is to choreograph a dance piece centered on this process as well as the final themes that emerge from the work. I am hoping that you will also assist in choreographic clarity and refining of movement to convey these findings.

I hope that you will be able to assist me in my thesis work by meeting for two, thirty to sixty minute sessions during June and July of 2017, before the Columbia College Chicago's Department of Creative Arts Therapies Annual Faculty and Student Concert on July 26th, 2017. I will be happy to discuss and negotiate compensation desired for this assistance. Please contact me if you have any further questions, or would like any additional information about my thesis study and work process. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

Shauna Shrewsbury

2017 MA Candidate Columbia College Chicago

**Appendix C.
Data Example: Reflection Sheet**

2.17.17

Reflection Sheet

Dance/Movement Therapy	Dance Education
<p>6:30pm Body Warm Up "Dancing Body"</p> <p align="center">Request for crowns & wands</p> <p>Improver w/ questions "Saying Goodbye With Our Bodies"</p> <p>7pm</p> <p>"Thank You Body"...</p>	<p align="center">→</p> <p>Full Isolation Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ballet barre / technique - <u>ACROSS THE FLOOR</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o battements o chaines o chasses o gapevines - quick "routine practice" <p align="center">→</p> <p align="center">★ SHAKETOFF! FREEZE Dance! ★</p> <p>- Goodbye & stickers 😊</p>

Appendix D.
Data Example - Artwork

