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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

CHOREOGRAPHY, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND
CONCLUSIONS: ASSESSING IF FACULTY
CHOREOGRAPHERS ARE AS INNOVATIVE
AS THE STUDENTS THEY TEACH

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance
Dance Education

December 2019

This Thesis by: Erika Goe

Entitled: *Choreography, Student Engagement, and Conclusions: Assessing if Faculty Choreographers are as Innovative as the Students they Teach*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the College of Performing and Visual Arts, School of Theatre Arts and Dance, Program of Dance Education

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ABSTRACT

Goe, Erika. *Choreography, Student Engagement, and Conclusions: Assessing if Faculty Choreographers are as Innovative as the Students they Teach*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2019.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of choreographic devices and how it impacts student engagement when learning choreography. The research aimed to evaluate if choreographic devices have an impact on student engagement by evaluating the utilization of specific choreographic devices when teaching choreography if there were significant differences between faculty and student exploration when creating work and if the differences explored enhanced or diminished student engagement levels. The forty-two participants were attending a junior college in Riverside, California and the research took place over the course of six weeks during the fall and spring semesters. During the fall semester, the researcher used participants in the faculty choreographed concert and during the spring semester, the participants were dancers in the student choreographed concert. Participant self-assessments and exit surveys were created to collect quantitative data to establish themes and recurring devices throughout the research. The results of the research indicated that participants were engaged throughout the choreography process although the choreographic devices being used by all the choreographers were not clearly determined. The results of the research indicated that clear choreographic devices do not have to be established for performers to be engaged or interested in the choreography being taught. There were no differences between student and faculty choreographers and their use of choreographic devices.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

Dance educators, professionals, students, choreographers, artistic directors and performers of any kind, have all been included in the choreographic experience at some point in their career. Choreography can be assembled in many ways, and often the development and creation of the work is what aesthetically draws others in. One aspect of developing choreography is the use of improvisation. Some would argue that well-structured and thoughtful choreography first develops from the use of improvisation. In the book, *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*, Sandra Minton states, “Whether a dance includes technological innovations or not, discovering fitting movements through improvisation is an important part of the choreography process” (1). Minton goes on to explain the different types of improvisation, such as structured and contact, arguing their relevance within choreography. A person without previous knowledge of structured choreography may inquire about improvisation and why it is so heavily regarded in the dance community. One would first have to understand what improvisation is, and what value it brings to dance choreography, before assessing its value. In her article, “Improvisation in Process: ‘Post Control’ Choreography,” Annie Kloppenberg states:

There are, generally, two schools of thought about improvisation. One considers improvisation to be the act of freeing the unconscious mind, channeling a deep, internal source to 'speak' through the improvised form without submitting what emerges to the imperious control of the conscious mind. The other sees it as the ultimate act of consciousness, one of expanding awareness and making careful, often immediate compositional choices that carve and follow an emergent trajectory. (186)

When assessing the thought process behind improvisation, one may investigate how the act of freeing the unconscious mind, can be a productive tool in creating choreography?

Although choreography is the composition of steps and movements that always begins from a place of creation, we seek to answer whether improvisation is always a useful and necessary place to begin. In a formal, higher education choreography class, a dance student often learns the value and importance of improvisation. Dance educator and scholar Margaret H'Doubler was quoted saying,

With the savage, expressive acts could have been none other than random, impulsive movements that afforded quite unconscious outlet to his passing feelings. Gradually they were modified by his growing realization of the effect of his own actions until they finally became consciously and intentionally expressive. (Lavender, *Dialogical Practices* 380)

Choreography and improvisation often permit the students to find their own voice and determine what feels good and natural to their body. Aspiring choreographers learn that the choreographic process will always be different depending on their artistic intent, theme, state of mind, surrounding stimuli, and the way in which dancers are being taught the movement. A choreography class will teach students the importance of structure and different dance forms when creating work. The different types of dance forms found in choreography can be identified as AB, ABA, rondo, theme, variation, call and response, narrative, and rhythmic patterns.

The rehearsal process is also a valued component that is taught within a choreography class. Knowing that the energy and engagement within rehearsal ultimately impacts the production of choreography and its presentation to an audience is just as vital as the choreography itself. Alternate tools that choreographers use when creating and teaching are choreographic devices. Choosing appropriate choreographic devices and how those devices initially engage dancers is fundamental to the rehearsal process. In the research article, “Dialogical Practices in Teaching Choreography,” the author, Larry Lavender, poses the operative questions in rehearsal criticism for young choreographers that include:

How does the choreographer attend to the material? What is observed; what is overlooked? What is discussed with the performers; what passes unmentioned? Perhaps the choreographer’s activity is deliberate, or maybe it is sporadic, with the choreographer rarely pausing to decide anything but saying open to opportunities for inventiveness and veering off occasionally to explore tangents. What is unique about his rehearsal? Each case is different; there is no formula to suggest how many or what kinds of discrete creative actions are needed.
(*Dialogical Practices* 392)

Taking into account the content and knowledge often taught to aspiring choreographers in a higher education atmosphere, the researcher focused this study on whether dance students are following the “formula” and suggested choreographic pathways that are being taught such as beginning with basic improvisation to build structure for artistic choices.

Today’s capacity of dancer is different than dancers even a decade ago. The heavy influence found in today’s media, political awareness, and sexuality, perhaps provides an apparent bridge between the faculty and student dancers. The access to material and exposure experienced by today’s young dancers may differ from that of their faculty advisors. Twenty years ago, YouTube and media influence did not have the same impact

on daily life as it does today. A theme or concern of a dancer today may differ from a dancer in years prior due to the nature of the environment around them. Just as Romanticism erupted during the 18th century due to the literature, art work, and music that was being created during that time, the same type of representation is present in dance choreography today. Choreographers are influenced by the stimuli of what is around them. The use of technology and the fast pace of today's society suggest that our present student choreographers may be changing the way they develop and present choreography to their dancers. The internet is also a means for dancers to learn and receive choreography. The use of technology, such as YouTube and Vimeo, allows dancers to view material and endless possibilities by choreographers worldwide. This type of exposure to material was not possible before and may impact the way current student choreographers create and teach their work. This extensive exposure to a variety of stimuli may depict the type of choreographic choices used in comparison to faculty choreographers. A recent article written by Zachary Whittenburg, "How Online Videos Changed the Dance World," discussed the argument that all has been changed within today's dance, due to the inherent influence and use of the internet. Whittenburg states:

Today, choreography once considered sacred and only transferred person-to-person is now self-taught, edited and remixed in bedrooms and basements, across the U.S. and beyond. No aspect of the dance industry, however commercial or "purely artistic," remains untouched by the explosion of video around the internet over the past decade. It's made a profound impact on everything from how students learn to what audiences want, when choreographers succeed and which artists win support from donors, funders and presenters. (Whittenburg)

The influence of technology may be present within student's choreographic work and engage their performers in a different way.

The goal of this research was to assess the use of choreographic devices by faculty and student choreographers when presenting new choreography. The choreographic devices were evaluated based on student engagement throughout a rehearsal process. Researcher observation during the choreography process helped to establish whether improvisation was a choreographic tool used amongst all or some choreographers at any point during the rehearsal process. Researcher observations also provided the opportunity for journaling and note taking for any data not documented from the participants in this research. This research seeks to evaluate whether improvisation is a recurring device that is used when developing new material amongst choreographers and their dancers in higher education. Previous research suggests that today's choreographers are drawn to the use of improvisation to allow the dancers to feel a sense of ownership within the dance piece:

Process in which choreographers work collaboratively with dancers to generate fixed choreography out of improvisational explorations. It is a dialogical process, a modulated, deliberate transfer of control from choreographer to dancer that relies on the moments in which choreographers loosen their grip on the whole, give dancers agency and freedom, allow a piece to develop its own identity, and become audience to their own work-in-process. (Kloppenber 189)

Purpose of Study

Choreographic devices and tools used during the composition and creation of choreography can be interpreted in many ways. For this study, choreographic devices were defined as any tool used by the choreographer to establish the creation of a dance piece. Some examples of a choreographic device include: canon, motif, contrast, accumulation, repetition, reversal, retrograde, inversion, fragmentation, imagery, embellishment, and improvisation. Forms of inspiration used when developing choreography may be story-telling, imagery, musical influences, character building,

photos, and film. This study assesses the usefulness of choreographic devices and its impact on student engagement throughout the rehearsal process. Scholar and dance educator, Wade Madsen, explains that the goals of choreography “are to open channels to creativity, teach students that they are their own teacher, and help them figure out how to let their minds and bodies experiment” (McClellan 62).

This study aimed to discover if college faculty choreographers utilize the principles and content that they teach to their student choreographers. This study also addresses whether student choreographers are adhering to the formal methods for creating choreography or if they are exploring their own methods and innovative techniques to engage their performers.

An additional goal of this study assessed the level of student engagement throughout the rehearsal process by exploring if the use of specific tools and choreographic devices may be more useful during the rehearsal process and how the performers responded to the choreography. This type of research could inform choreography and improvisation course curriculum to consider alternatives for coursework and curriculum for beginning choreographers. Madsen, professor of dance at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle teaches his students to choreograph works from the given tools learned within his choreography class. Lodi McClellan, also a professor of dance at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle interviewed Madsen on his expertise in teaching choreography. In McClellan’s article, “Wade Madsen: Teaching Choreography,” she quotes Madsen, saying:

I can’t tell them how to dance or how to make up a dance. I can only give them the tools. I tell the students, make the dance you want to see, but don’t make the dance you think will irritate the audience. (64)

This research may be a suggested resource for the “tools” provided within a choreography class to expand and change to better suit the capacity of the students being instructed.

The art of creating choreography is intimate and personal; however, keeping performers and audiences engaged is a crucial part of being a successful choreographer and dance educator. A closer look at the use of choreographic devices and tools being used during the rehearsal process may provide insight on how to help develop aspiring and experienced choreographers alike. The development of well-designed choreography takes time and can be a multifaceted experience. It takes an experienced eye for a choreographer to know when she is losing the attention of her performers and it takes responsibility and honesty to assess whether it is the material being presented, the devices being used, casting, or any other element that affects the dance piece. Staying true oneself as a choreographer is important, but engagement is also valued during the choreographic process.

You, as a learner, must be involved in the discovery of the concepts you will use as tools of this trade. There will be no right or wrong decisions to be made but only choices that work better for you and your audiences. You must learn to evaluate those choices to find what works best for you as a choreographer. In this way you will discover the dance within you; that is completely yours and is not a copy of any other dancer or teacher. (Green 4)

Significance of Study

Educators are always looking for ways to grow their instructional practice to better educate and equip students. This research seeks to provide insight on the ways in which choreographers may expand their thought processes beyond improvisation and use alternate choreographic devices to continually engage student dancers and performers. Beyond the scope of improvisation, dance choreographers may teach prospective student

choreographers to continually expand their thoughts and ideas past their first instincts. Choreographers learn to create beyond the physical elements of movement and begin to think critically as the dance maker. In the article, “From Improvisation to Choreography,” Larry Lavender and Jennifer Predock-Linnell address the importance for choreographers to expand their creativity and revise their work past the state of improvisation.

In composing a dance, then, we encourage student choreographers to try out ideas, stop along the way to analyze, interpret, and assess how these ideas are working-i.e. how the dance is coming together-and erase, revise, and switch directions as many times as necessary. In working this way artists must engage in a continual dialogue with themselves and with the artistic materials with which they work. As all experienced artists know, art works as they unfold tend to take on a will of their own; they begin to ‘speak back’ to the artist. It is usually not long before unfolding works-in-progress begin to suggest their own possibilities to artists who must ‘listen’ to these and consider them in light of their own intentions for the piece. (Lavender and Predock-Linnell, *From Improvisation* 203)

Many of the dynamics Lavender and Predock-Linnell discuss in their article are taught to aspiring choreographers in upper-level choreography classes. This exploration may extend to dance educators in regards to the importance of reaching beyond the use of improvisation when teaching new work. All choreographers have different propensities and methods that best suit them when creating their work; yet, all possibilities for the creation of choreography may not be explored and discussed within a choreography class.

Jo Butterworth suggests that today’s higher education choreography classes are:

Based on the rationale that the choreography curriculum for the twenty-first century should be broad and balanced, and that tertiary students will benefit from a range of skills, knowledge and understanding germane to possible future career prospects in a changing and complex arts environment. (45)

The observations collected throughout this research intended to explore whether aspiring choreographers are choreographing the way they are being taught within their choreography classes, or if they are examining more experimental opportunities when

creating. It was not the intention of this research to diminish the value and importance of improvisation throughout the choreography process, but instead, to establish the ways in which other choreographic devices may connect and engage the student dancers in the same way. Understanding student engagement and how it can impact a student's learning was a significant portion of this research.

Student engagement, amongst higher education students, is a valuable component for all academic disciplines, not just dance. Understanding how students think and perceive what is being presented is an important part of being an educator. To reach students and maintain student engagement throughout the rehearsal process, choreographers must first understand how today's students think and what demands their attention. When assessing student engagement, as choreographers and educators, we must consider all elements involved in a student's thought process. Current research on student engagement suggests that there are different scales and levels of engagement amongst the average college student. "The National Survey of Student Engagement... is a survey tool used to measure student engagement within the behavioral perspective. The NSSE (2010) has five engagement scales: academic challenge, active learning, interactions, enriching educational experiences and supportive learning environment" (Kahu 759). Dance educators and choreographers must remain aware that although dance content academia is movement based, the learning process should still engage students across all five scales. The choreographic process may need to become more challenging academically with complex movement and rhythmic patterns. The choreography process should always consist of active learning, an atmosphere of student and teacher interaction, and the process should be presented as an educational experience and should always be a

supportive learning environment. This research may serve as a learning tool for aspiring choreographers to be aware of choreographic devices being used within a choreography rehearsal and how it may or may not engage their student dancers. According to Kahu, student's engagement is heavily associated with the way they are being taught.

The most widely accepted view of engagement in higher education literature emphasizes student behavior and teaching practice. Student engagement was seen as an evolving construct that captures a range of institutional practices and student behaviors related to student satisfaction and achievement, including time on task, social and academic integration, and teaching practices. (759)

The utilization of choreographic devices that immediately reaches and engages the students is an important part of the learning process during a choreography session. It is imperative for the rehearsal process that dancers remain engaged and desire to be a part of the work.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Choreography and Student Engagement

When thinking about creating choreography, the connectivity found between the creation process and student engagement levels comes to mind. Choreographers often establish and create work with the assumption that students or those participating will like it and will enjoy dancing the material. Dance educators and choreographers tend to create from a personal space of preference, expression, and what feels important at the time of creation. The personal aesthetics and passion that is encrypted in choreographic work may not always engage the performer which in turn may impact the outcome of the work. Knowing how to speak to and reach the current population of students is imperative. The students within the 21st century differ from those who were taught twenty years ago. Today's dance faculty must know their students and the expectations surrounding engagement during the process. Previous research done by Susan Haines and Talani Torres, dance educators and researchers from Florida State College, discusses "millennials," and how their expectations and learning differ from the many generations of students that preceded them:

Millennials are now entering into college, the workforce, and our dance classes. As we examine our teaching strategies, it is important to consider the learning profile specific to this population of students, though we want to be clear that this is a Generalization about a group that has multiple voices and behaviors. If there's One overriding perception of millennials, it is that they are a generation with great – and sometimes outlandish – expectations...Many millennials feel an unusually

strong sense of entitlement. Entitlement may be the result of growing up with constant praise and ‘participation’ awards...this can create a sense of achievement but may leave students without the necessary skills to embrace a challenge, as they have not developed any coping skills for dealing with failure or disappointment. (154)

This type of student thinking and the feelings of “entitlement” are being displayed by students across all disciplines of academia. In dance classes, and especially in choreography, if dancers are not being challenged and engaged by the instructor, they may not have the desire to continue learning from that faculty member. It is imperative that dance educators stay current with material and can teach in a manner that engages and reaches our student climate. Lack of engagement with any dance piece can ultimately devastate the work. The dynamic between choreographer and student may be lost due to lack of engagement and ultimately the dancer may not respond or perform the work in the manner or with the respect the work deserves. Ensuring that students are fully engaged in any process is impossible; however, it is the choreographer’s responsibility to try and make the students feel confident, interested, and involved in the work to try and secure engagement.

This generation of students needs to feel encouraged and empowered by the choreography they are learning. Within the rehearsal process, it would be the desire of the choreographer for students to take something away from the work that they could use in future teaching situations or even within a day-to-day life experience. Haines and Torres indicate:

Students to be empowered when: they become aware of the collaborative nature of performance; they cultivate creative thinking through spontaneous and intuitive choices during rehearsals; they assuage the ego and learn to consider the group before self; and recognize the process and product as equally distributed among them, as collaborators. (154)

These points are embodied during the choreographic process and are often the expectation of the choreographer when seeking student engagement. Infusing choreography with creative choreographic devices and creative concepts found within today's technology may speak to our student dance population in a different way. There are so many advantages and endless opportunities for creativity when paired with technology, as one vessel to reach and engage our students. YouTube is a highly viewed application for many if not all of today's students. Utilizing this type of resource as an educational platform can help educate our students through viewing examples of well-developed choreography and underdeveloped work. Researching other choreographers and their techniques through dance blogs, websites, and other online forums can also be instrumental with today's technologically savvy students. The use of technology and how it continues to benefit the educational arena in all disciplines is astounding:

Technology, in its many forms, is being utilized across all sectors of the dance training industry: schools, private dance studios and universities. Visibility in this arena is strongly connected to accessibility and as such digital technology use traditionally involves commonly employed devices, software and platforms such as computers, smart phones, iPods and video cameras; software for basic audio, video and graphics editing; and online platforms such as YouTube, dance blogs and websites, and specialized platforms designed for educational institutions. (Huddy 176)

The relatability technology delivers to students should provide choreographers with the ability to keep their dancers engaged throughout the choreography process. Having access to materials and instruments that excite today's students may help to keep engagement positive and the learning process empowering while beneficial to choreographers and students alike. The value and energy that engaged dancers bring to choreography is important for performance value and for the growth and development of the dancer. When dancers are fully engaged in the choreography process, it allows the

choreographer to fully develop the choreography on the dancers. Lack of engagement may cause a disconnect with the performer and choreographer which then may later create a disconnect with the audience or the growth of the student. Dancers are always growing and learning from each experience. Choreography is a way for dancers to express their thoughts, feelings, and desires. Complete engagement may allow the dancer to take the choreography process and learn from the discipline. All educators and choreographers instruct and create differently. The opportunity to learn with an open mind and awareness of engagement will help facilitate the dancer's opportunity for growth.

What is Choreography?

According to Dictionary.com, choreography is “the art of composing ballets and other dances and planning and arranging the movements, steps, and patterns of dancers” (www.dictionary.com). The simplicity of the definition makes choreography sound like a simple task within the arena of dance. Choreography is the root to all dance outside of learning the technique to execute the choreography. Every aspect of the dance world includes choreography. From recreational recitals to the New York City Ballet, each characteristic of dance and every genre includes a choreography component.

Choreography is created for competition, artistic intent, dance recitals, concerts, Broadway shows, choreography reels, a professional performance, and much more. Often the way to highlight the improvements dancers have made throughout a season may be through showcasing choreography. Graduate level students are often required to create and choreograph a piece for graduation evaluation. For aspiring dance educators, taking a choreography class and learning how to choreograph during undergraduate studies is

common to pass down to future generations of dancers. Prospective dance educators and choreographers must understand what choreography is and how its placement within dance education and performance is imperative for the survival of dance. Although the basis of dance is movement, the value of dance is judged by the performances of the choreography that are presented at colleges, studios, companies, and dance concerts. Understanding the dynamics of choreography and what is involved in the creation process is vital for future work. Learning how to structure choreography helps facilitate and teach dancers how to choreograph in the future. Some scholars would argue that Isadora Duncan was the first dancer to “structure a dance,” in the late 1800’s; however, in 1928, Rudolf Laban created and published *Kinetographie Laban*, “a dance notation system that came to be called Labanotation and is still used as one of the primary movement notations systems in dance,” (<https://labaneffortsinaction.com/labans-efforts>). Laban’s teaching principles and theories are foundational influences in modern dance, dance notation, and choreography classes. In recent research on choreography in higher education institutions, Jo Butterworth discussed some of Laban’s beliefs about choreography and how it shapes dancers and students into the artist and creators they become.

Laban believed in the dancer as creator as well as interpreter. He emphasized mastery of movement and personal expression, placed importance on dance play, improvisation and experimentation, and a desired synthesis between understanding dance and practicing dance. These notions were adapted for use with young people in practical dance education sessions in schools, but were also applied to the training intending teachers in colleges of education...A range of creative dance-composing situations can be provided that engages students both practically and cognitively, and demand individuality, imagination and an element of ownership. (52)

Butterworth's research and Laban's theories make choreographing much more than simply "the arranging of movements and steps." Choreography must not be as simple as the definition implies or there would not be so much focus and emphasis on learning the skill within dance education programs. Some would argue that all strong dance educators, whether choreographers or not, must know how to choreograph to teach.

The most important goal of dance education at the college and university level is to teach people to make dances. Even those students who aim to become something other than a choreographer – say, a performer, a critic, an historian, a Labanotator, a technique teacher, a designer, an administrator, or some other kind of dance professional – will do a better job for dance if they have had experience actually composing dances. Indeed, the work done by everyone else in the dance world is in a sense parasitic upon that of the choreographer – if dance makers do not make dances, the rest are out of business. (Lavender and Predock-Linnell, *From Improvisation* 196)

Making sure today's dancers are learning the value and importance of choreography is key to the future of dance education and the dance world. A focus within choreography classes is the importance of creativity. And creative, well-structured choreography typically comes from a place beginning with improvisation, according to the research. Improvisation paired with experimental exploration allows for choreographers to explore their ability to create. Choreography is a safe place for experimentation and freedom of expression. Through time and experience, choreographers gain the confidence and ability to be free with their dance making which may have been influenced by using improvisation initially.

Improvisation is "something that is improvised, especially a piece of music, drama, etc., created without preparation," (www.dictionary.com). The tool of improvisation is often taught within a choreography or modern class and is typically embedded within the structure of choreography itself. For aspiring dance teachers and

choreographers to benefit from the use of improv, they first must understand its purpose within choreography and how to develop their thoughts fully. Some tools dance educators may use during a choreography or modern class when teaching improvisation are exploratory or compositional assignments. “Exploratory prompts ask students to work within narrow and pre-determined conceptual and/or aesthetic limits. These prompts have a definite end in view, and are designed to generate material without requiring the student to overly make decisions about its shape, style, sequencing, or anything else,” (Lavender and Predock-Linnell, *From Improvisation* 205). This fully allows the student to start from any place of desire and begin to move without limitations. This type of structure enables the dancers to create and design what feels natural and easy to their bodies and minds. The teacher may provide oral prompts and ques to help direct and facilitate the students’ movement, but there is no theme or design attached to the improv. Compositional improvisation requires the students to make specific decisions and “critical choices” about their movement. Although the dancer is still improving, compositional improv requires the students to try and process the steps even before they have been created; they must edit their work as they are creating it. Artists are continually editing and recreating their movement choices to make their work both aesthetically pleasing to self and others, and to create ultimate satisfaction. This type of artistry comes from improvised work according to Lavender and Predock-Linnell:

At some point something has to be manipulated, deleted, added, repeated, or revised. For example, the teacher might instruct the students to improvise five clearly distinct body shapes. Next, the teacher may ask the students both to *alter* these shapes in some deliberate manner, and to *arrange* them into a sequence that the students must manipulate the shapes in accordance with their personal understanding or the above terms. Here the student’s aesthetic values come consciously into play as an influence upon their artistic choices. (*From Improvisation* 205)

Although compositional improvisation is a form of improv, its structure is much like what choreographers do when creating a new piece of work. Choreographers often must manipulate, delete, add, repeat, and revise their work when creating. Choreographic devices come into play with several of the same editing connected to compositional improv, such as repetition of movement, manipulating movement (also known as fragmentation), and revising work or phrasing. The importance and value of choreography must be impressed upon the upcoming generation of dancers for the dance world to continue to thrive and cultivate.

The Value of Choreography to Further Dance Education and Student Involvement

Facilitating the value and importance of choreography to prospective dance makers and dance educators is imperative. The ability to choreograph is a skill that all can acquire through teaching or experience. Researcher Jan Van Dyke states that:

It seems clear that choreographic craft can be taught just like any other skill: by defining discrete goals and using explanation, questioning, repetition, and practice to achieve understanding and achievement. This area of artistry is knowledge that can be transferred, in a way that more elusive, personal aspects such as meaning, inspiration, and creativity cannot. Once in possession of skills for crafting dances, students are equipped to begin other kinds of exploration. (116)

Through vigilant practice, and understanding of the choreographic process, the skill of choreographing can be achieved. It is important that aspiring choreographers understand the value that choreography brings to the dance community and dance education and understand that they are codependent. Choreography is dependent on the understanding of relationship to movement while using time, space, and energy. Learning the technical components of dance is genre specific and is only one portion of the art form. The display

of technique and the artistic value associated with dance is exhibited through choreography. Some would argue that technique is not required to choreograph, though without the use of the technical elements involved in dance, how would one structure choreography? Van Dyke indicates that:

Throughout the ages it has been argued that technique and creativity are in opposition of each other and that rules and technique can get in the way of imagination. Some thinkers hold that creativity and inspiration require unlimited freedom and that technique of any kind imposes restrictions. I believe, however, that acquiring technical competence is inseparably bound to learning to understand an activity. (117)

If learning dance technique were not an important and valued portion of dance making, no dancer or dance educator would ever be required to take dance classes across genres. Van Dyke goes on to state that the use of technique allows the students to utilize their previously acquired “tools to explore and use according to need,” (Van Dyke 117). These previously gained skill sets will help aspiring dance makers and dance educators to move forward with well-structured choreography to engage current and future dancers alike. When learning how to choreograph, prospective students must recognize the responsibility that comes with dance making.

Larry Lavender discusses the importance of dance making among dance concerts and theatrical dance, and describes how it can be created in several ways making the case that,

No matter how dance making begins, however, unless the work is to be improvised afresh each time it is performed, a process of developing, revising, and “setting” the work needs to take place. To move confidently and successfully from thinking up an idea for a dance to generating movement, to putting the finishing touches on the work, a choreographer must make hundreds, perhaps thousands, of creative decisions, each of which may be seen as a judgement of artistic taste. (*Creative Process* 6)

Through choreography class and experience, dance makers and educators will understand how to develop and teach choreography to their audience. The future of dance education and the arts depends on today's dancers learning how to choreograph and to excel at the skill. Making sure that tomorrow's choreographers find their own voice is an important part of learning how to choreograph. This research aims to assess if student choreographers are choreographing in the way they are taught, or if they are following their own voice and creating in a manner that will begin to structure who they will become as dance makers. Allowing student choreographers with a focus on higher education, to create in a manner that is comfortable for them may not only help to facilitate the growth of new choreography within the dance arena, but may also help to engage other dancers who did not realize they were interested in choreographing or possibly teaching. A recent study by researcher Joyce Morgenroth discusses how today's higher education choreography classes may be leaving students with limited resources to create outside of the college walls:

Traditional composition classes teach the tools of choreographic craft, yet leave students in an odd limbo in which they create a special breed of "college dance" that has little to do with the current dance world. In the twenty-first century, choreography teachers must go beyond an emphasis on traditional craft and help students find their own roots of creativity and, in particular, the methods of dance composition that will help them produce work with their personal signatures. By trying out methods used by contemporary choreographers, students will understand how the nature of a dance is shaped by the means used in making it and will discover and develop their own creative process. (19)

Making sure that students are prepared for every facet of the dance world is essential. Although students are taking classes at the college level, all may not continue to teach within the confines of higher education. Still, the knowledge gained through choreography classes will benefit them in every aspect of teaching dance and for the

creation of choreography. Being able to connect to the students on a more contemporary level, choreography wise, is more suited to today's dynamic of dancer.

Summary

Through the course of this study, the researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of choreographic devices used throughout the choreography process and how their uses may determine student engagement. To better understand the choreography process, first understanding choreography and its relevance to dance education was necessary. The development and creation of choreography is taught in higher education classroom settings, and prospective dance educators and choreographers must understand the dynamics of how to choreograph before doing so. Ensuring that the choreography is relevant and structurally sound may facilitate a correlation with student engagement.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of choreographic devices and how they may impact student engagement throughout the choreography process. The research helped to evaluate if choreographic devices had an impact on student engagement by evaluating the following questions:

- Q1 Did utilization of specific choreographic devices impact overall student engagement and choreography outcomes?
- Q2 Were there significant differences between faculty and student exploration when creating choreography?
- Q3 Did these differences enhance or diminish student engagement?

Before data collection could begin, the researcher had to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). To obtain such approval, she had to submit a formative, narrative application indicating the purpose of the study, the methods that would take place throughout the study, how the data would be analyzed, and specifics about the prospective participants. Upon completion of the required revisions, the researcher received approval from the IRB to conduct her research and begin the data collection. The researcher received a formal letter from the institutional Review Board via email. (Appendix A)

Participants

There were forty-two participants in this research study. All participants were of legal adult age and were college students attending Riverside City College in Riverside, California. Gender specificity was not obtained due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that protects all registered college students. Each participant was a student dancer registered for repertory classes to participate in the Fall and/or Spring dance concerts at the college. Participant recruitment for this research took place within three randomly selected faculty pieces and three randomly selected student choreographed pieces. The dancers within each piece were not required to participate in this research as participants. All the dancers from the faculty-choreographed work participated in this study; however, several dancers from the student-choreographed pieces opted not to participate. Prior dance experience and previous participation in concert dance was not required to participate in the dance performances or research. Participants were asked about their previous training experience and fifty-seven percent indicated they were beginning to intermediate level dancers while the remaining forty-three percent declared themselves to be intermediate to advanced level dancers.

The Fall concert was faculty choreographed and the students were required to audition for piece selection. The entirety of the fall cast did not participate in the research. Three faculty choreographers were selected at random to be observed for data collection and only twenty-four dancers made up the fall participation pool. The spring concert was student choreographed and the student performers were required to audition for piece selection by their peers. Like the fall semester, prior dance experience and previous participation in concert dance was not required to participate in the dance

performances or research. Only three student-choreographed pieces were selected at random for observation and not all the student dancers participated in the research. There were eighteen new participants during the spring semester, and twenty-one of the same student dancers from the fall semester. The three student choreographers that participated in the fall semester data collection were not included in the data pool during the spring semester. All participants were required to complete and sign a consent form before collecting any data. Since the dancers were all legal adult age, permission from the colleges dance department and parents were not required for this research project.

Research Procedures

Over the course of six weeks in the fall, observation sessions of the three faculty choreographers' rehearsal processes took place, and for six weeks in the spring semester, three different student choreographers' rehearsal processes were observed. The researcher observations were implemented to notate the use of choreographic devices and how the students reacted and/or engaged throughout the learning process. Researcher journals were kept for each of the six choreographers during each rehearsal over the course of six weeks each semester. Observation was incorporated to cross-compare differences that may have been reported on the participant surveys versus what had been observed first hand from an outside source.

After the third week of observation, the participants were provided with a self-assessment to rate their engagement levels within the piece up to that point. After the choreography had been completed, approximately during the sixth week of observation, the participants were given the same self-assessment to rate their engagement level now that the work had been completed. The participants were also given an exit survey to

assess the choreographic devices used throughout the choreography process and how it impacted their engagement. It should be noted that the researcher did not consecutively watch rehearsals for six weeks. For the choreography process to progress naturally, choreographers may or may not have consistently added new material weekly. Nevertheless, observations were conducted for each choreographer a total of six times.

Research Instruments

Through general observation notes of the choreography, the researcher determined the choreographic devices being used throughout the creation process. The researcher only observed the interactions between the choreographers and the dancers within each dance piece. The researcher had no interaction with the participants, nor choreographers during rehearsals. Any notes obtained by the researcher remained in a locked cabinet in a home office throughout the data collection process. For each dance piece observed, the researcher kept weekly journal entries. The journals allowed the researcher to document any questions asked by the participants throughout the choreographic process, concerns being established within the choreography, student's energy levels while learning the movement, and any observations that the researcher felt were pertinent during the process. The journals were color coded by choreographer to keep identification of each rehearsal. (Appendix C)

The student self-assessment was created by the researcher and administered twice throughout the course of the study. The self-assessments were provided once the choreography had reached a mid-way point in the rehearsal process and once again upon the completion of the choreography process. A three-scale rubric was established to assess if the students felt they were completely engaged, somewhat engaged, or not

engaged during the choreographic process. The student self-assessment tool enabled the researcher to compare the levels of student engagement amongst the students within each dance piece. The self-assessment tool also facilitated in deciphering whether the choreographic devices had possibly impacted their decisions. (Appendix D)

Participants were correspondingly given a written exit survey upon the completion of learning the choreography. The participants were able to share how they felt about the choreographic devices used, how it impacted their overall engagement, and their attitude towards the dance piece through a five-point rubric scale. The survey also investigated any expectations they may have had when they first entered the choreographic process and how those expectations may or may not have been met. (Appendix E)

Data Analysis

In referring to the three initial questions posed in the research study section of this chapter, the data from the participant student self-assessment and student exit survey guided quantitative analysis for the research. All collected data was analyzed by the researcher and used as a primary source for discussion of the results. The researcher's journals were utilized as salient data within the thesis. The three-scale rubric associated with the student self-assessment provided true quantitative data for this research. The student exit surveys incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data; however, the qualitative data presented various themes, which were then analyzed and used as quantitative data.

Quantitative Analysis

The student self-assessment was administered twice by the researcher throughout the data collection process. The student self-assessment consisted of two multiple-choice questions, which were used to rank the participants' level of engagement from green to red using behavior stickers. Each color was associated with a number for analysis purposes green being the highest, was awarded a three, the yellow was given a two, and red was granted a one on the scale. A green smiley face sticker indicated that the participant was completely engaged, a yellow slanted smile sticker indicated that the participant was somewhat engaged, and a red frowny face sticker indicated that the participant was completely unengaged. The researcher categorized the dancer's responses accordingly from the midway point within the choreography process and again at the end of the choreography process for each semester.

The student exit survey was administered once each semester and was provided to the participants at the end of the choreography process. The student exit survey consisted of six five-scale rubric questions and eight yes/no questions about the choreographer. The data collected was recorded using pie charts to visually illustrate choreographic devices used by the choreographers and to establish recurring themes between choreographers each semester. The student exit survey was also comprised of three fill-in the blank questions to establish theme of choreographic devices and student expectations. The responses to the three fill-in the blank questions provided distinct themes so the data was analyzed as quantitative.

Summary

This chapter explained the steps used to gather pertinent information for this research and the instruments used to gain participant consent and data collection. The next chapter will detail the discoveries and results of the research.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research study was to determine if choreographic choices made by choreographers throughout the choreography process impacted student engagement levels. The research also aimed to establish if student choreographers engage their performers differently from the faculty instructors they were studying under. By use of the student self-assessment and student exit survey, the researcher was able to establish the participants previous dance experience, previous experience learning choreography, the choreographers' use of choreographic devices, participants expectations during the rehearsal process, and student engagement levels. The documented data was inputted into pie charts, bar graphs, and tables to illustrate separation and overlap in any area of inquiry.

Participant Exit Survey Analysis

The participant exit survey was administered to the students once the choreography was completed. There were five questions extracted from the participant exit survey that were useful in establishing results for the research and are listed below. The participant exit survey questions provided quantitative data and were inputted into pie charts and bar graphs.

1. Please indicate your previous experience learning choreography.
2. Did your choreographer provide a specific device to choreograph?

3. If so, please indicate the choreographic device.
4. Did your choreographer use a device that was exciting or useful?
5. Were your expectations for this dance piece met by the choreographer?

The researcher first established the previous knowledge of learning choreography from the participant pool. Understanding the choreography process and the dynamics that take place during the rehearsal process were a vital part of this research. If the participant pool was unfamiliar with how choreography is developed and choreographic devices, their understanding of establishing engagement may have impacted the outcome of the research. The data provided by the participants indicated that most were experienced dancers and had previously participated in learning choreography in their dance background. The participants were asked to rate their levels of previous experience learning choreography across a five-point rubric scale. One indicated that they had no previous experience and five maintaining that they were experienced in the process. The first figure below illustrates the participants' previous experience in learning choreography for the faculty choreographers.

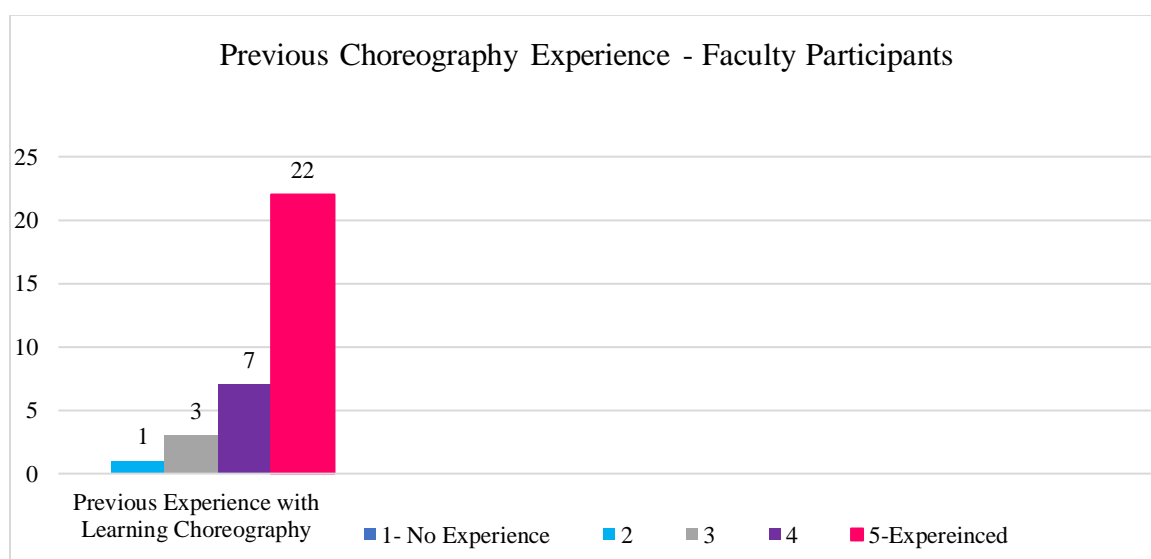


Figure 1. Participants Previous Experience Learning Choreography – Faculty Concert

The data represented on the second figure indicates the participants' responses to the same question but for the student choreographers.

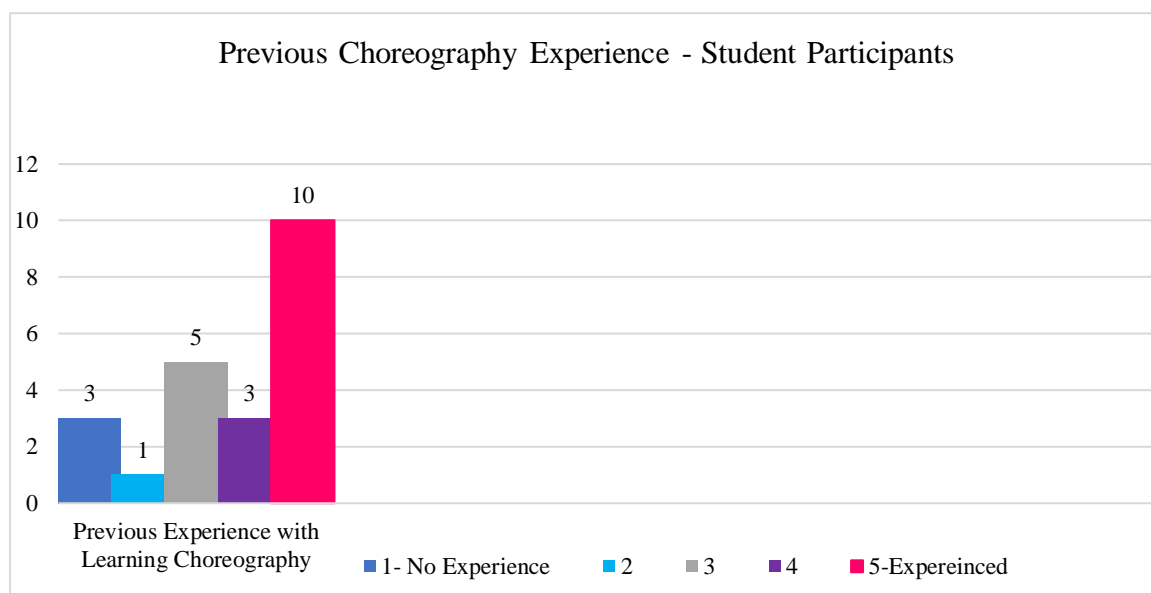


Figure 2. Participants Previous Experience Learning Choreography – Student Concert

Once the previous choreography experience had been established, the researcher then examined if all the choreographers used choreographic devices while teaching their movement. Participants were asked to indicate any devices used throughout the rehearsal process. The researcher was looking to determine if the student choreographers gravitated toward using the same choreographic devices that were used by their faculty advisors and if improvisation was a heavily used device among all the choreographers. As previously mentioned, improvisation is implied to be the foundation in which all sound choreography is structured. The researcher was looking to identify if both the faculty and student choreographers relied on improvisation as both a choreographic device and a beginning point for their movement skeletons. The figures below identify if any choreographic device was used by both the faculty and student choreographers within their rehearsals.

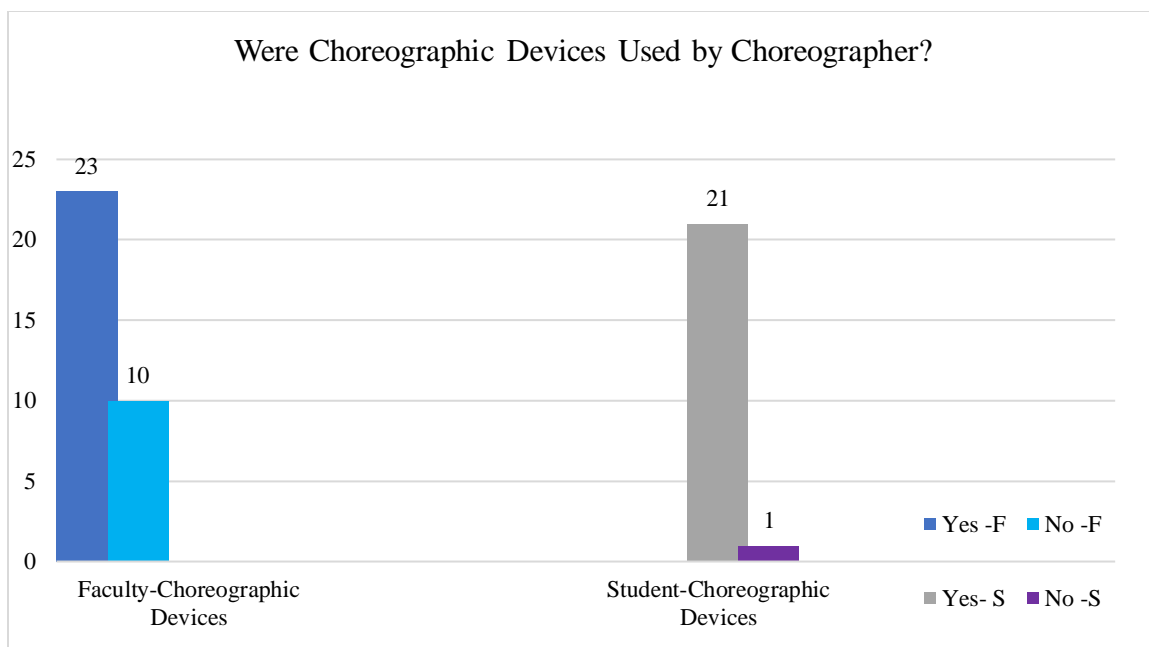


Figure 3. Were Choreographic Devices used by your Choreographer?

It was clear from the data that the student choreographers implemented the use of choreographic devices more within their rehearsal process from the point of view of the participants. However, thirty-three percent of the participants within the faculty pieces indicated that no choreographic device was used. This became an immediate interest to the researcher as the use of choreographic devices were expressed to be used by the other sixty seven percent of the participants. The participants that indicated no choreographic devices were being used may have been unfamiliar or unaware of what the device was.

Continuing through the exit survey data, the researcher then charted the reported choreographic devices used by both the faculty and student choreographers. Figure 4 illustrates the choreographic devices used by the faculty and the percentage in which the specific device was used among all three faculty choreographers. Figure 5 indicates the use of choreographic devices by the student choreographer.

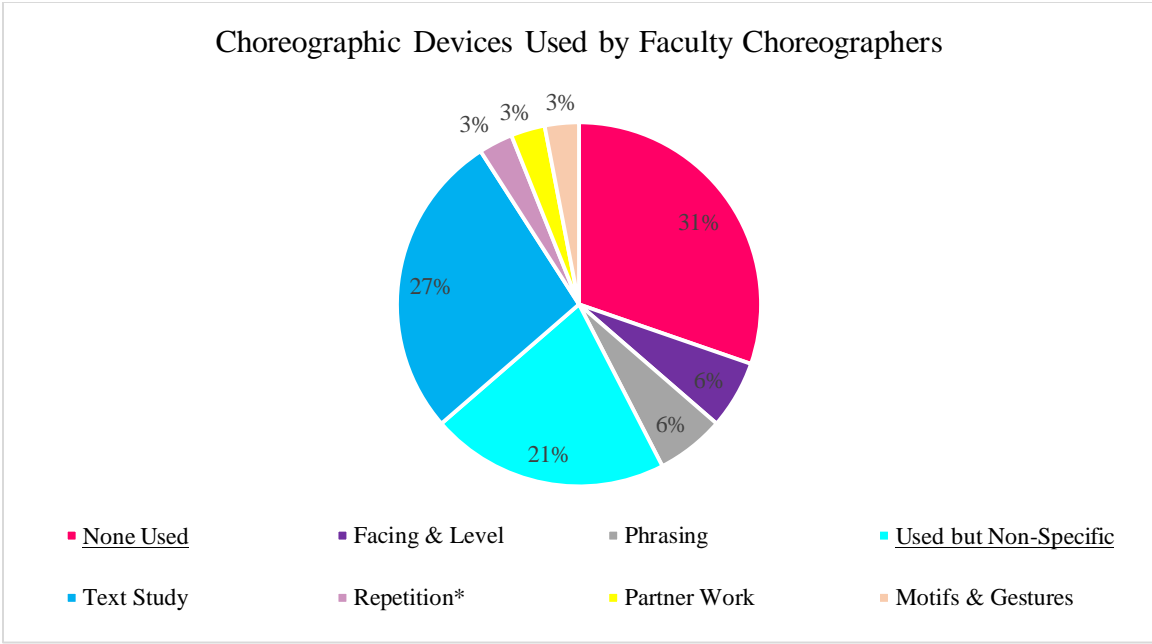


Figure 4. Choreographic Devices used by Faculty Choreographers

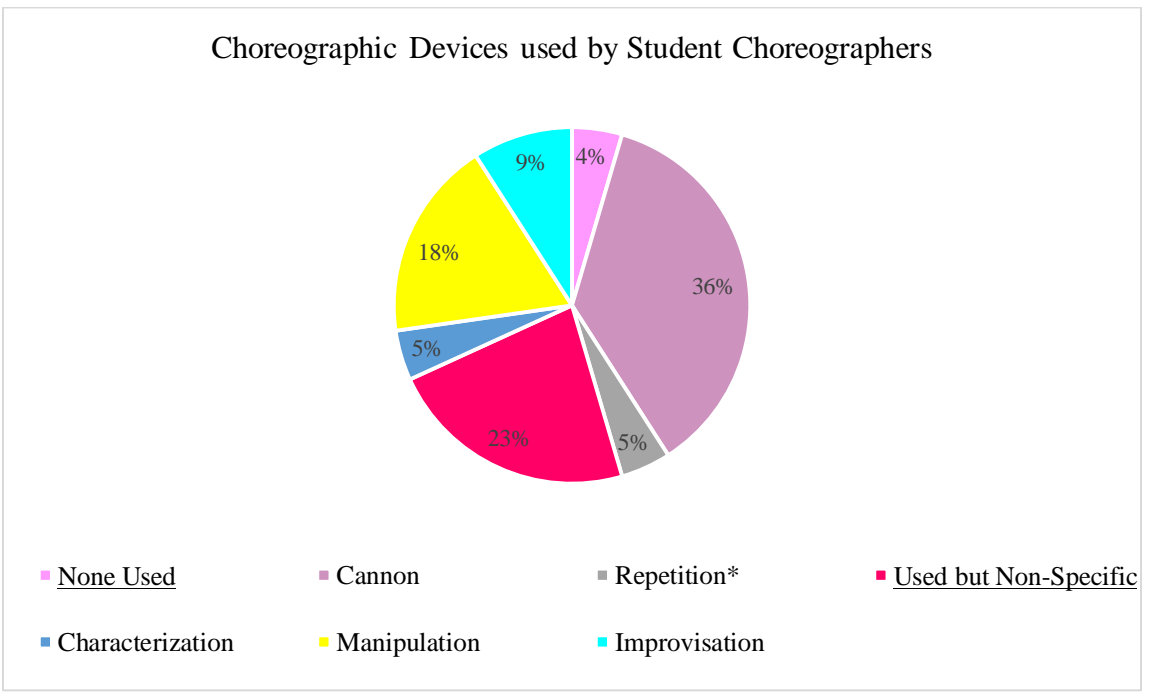


Figure 5. Choreographic Devices used by Student Choreographers

Although participants reported a higher rate of choreographic device use from the student choreographers versus the faculty choreographers, the reported data from question number two on the participant exit survey provide different findings. Please refer to

figure 3. Both faculty and student choreographers share a high percentage of “none used” in figure 5. Participants also recorded that faculty and student choreographers used choreographic devices within their rehearsal process but they were “non-specific” with the device used. This information indicates that although most participant dancers had previous experience with learning choreography, these dancers may not have previous knowledge or understanding of what choreographic devices are and how they are used throughout the choreography process. Reporting that choreographers used choreographic devices, but that they were non-specific or descriptive with their use is contradictory. Each device has a specific place and purpose when used within the choreography process. If the participants were unaware of the device being used, then they were unfamiliar with the material in general.

The next question extracted from the participant exit survey was the exploration process used by the choreographers and if the participants found the device to be exciting or useful. Creating excitement and usefulness throughout the choreography process is in part a predictor for student engagement levels. This research aims to link the usage of choreographic devices, the excitement brought to the choreography from the use of that device, and how they may be impacting student engagement levels. By questioning the participants about whether they found the devices to be useful or exciting provided the researcher with insight from the performer’s perspective. The next figure illustrates if the participants found the choreographic devices being used by faculty and student choreographers exciting or useful during rehearsals.

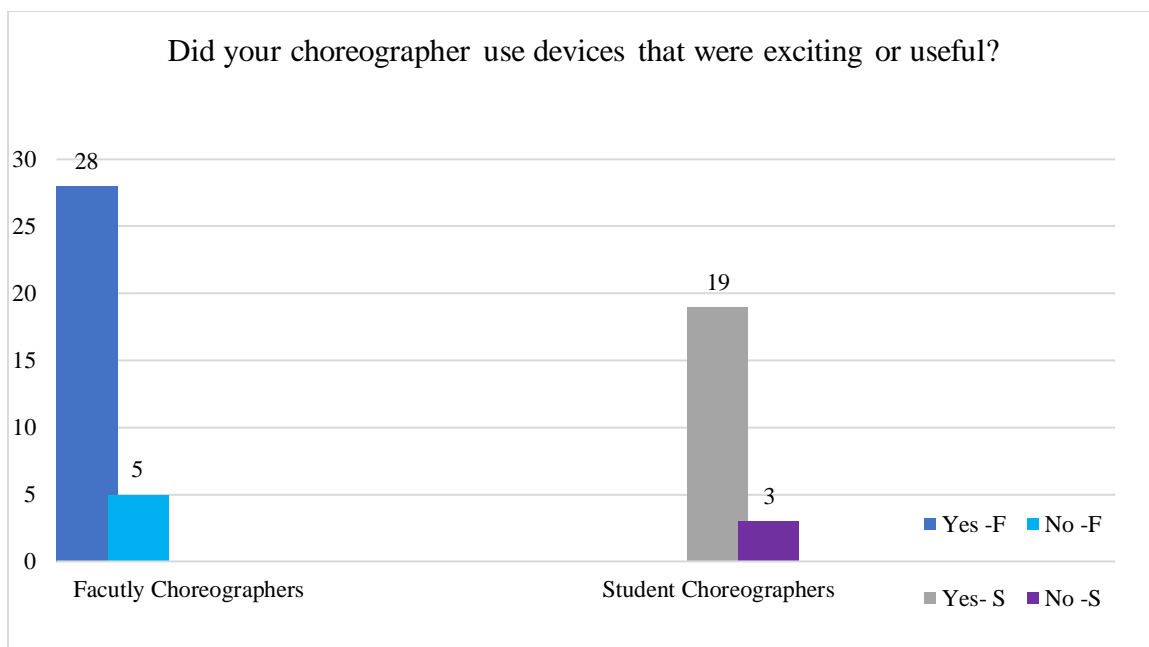


Figure 6. Did your choreographer use devices that were exciting or useful?

It was of great interest to the researcher that again, most participants reported that the choreographic devices being used by faculty and student choreographers was exciting and useful; however, the data previously reported established that many of the performers were unaware of what the choreographic device was at all. Seeing as most of the participants found the choreographic devices to be exciting or useful led to the last question being extracted from the participant exit survey regarding whether the expectations for this dance piece was met by the choreographer.

The dancer's expectations of what may have or should have taken place throughout the choreography process may directly impact their engagement levels as well. If students had a specific expectation of what was going to take place during the dance piece choreographically and the expectations were not met, the student may in turn be less inclined to engage fully in the choreography as a performer. The last two bar graphs below provide the feedback from the participants and if faculty and student

choreographers met their expectations. The participants were asked to rate their expectation levels across a five-point rubric scale; one stating that their expectations were not met, and five indicating the choreographer exceeded their expectations.

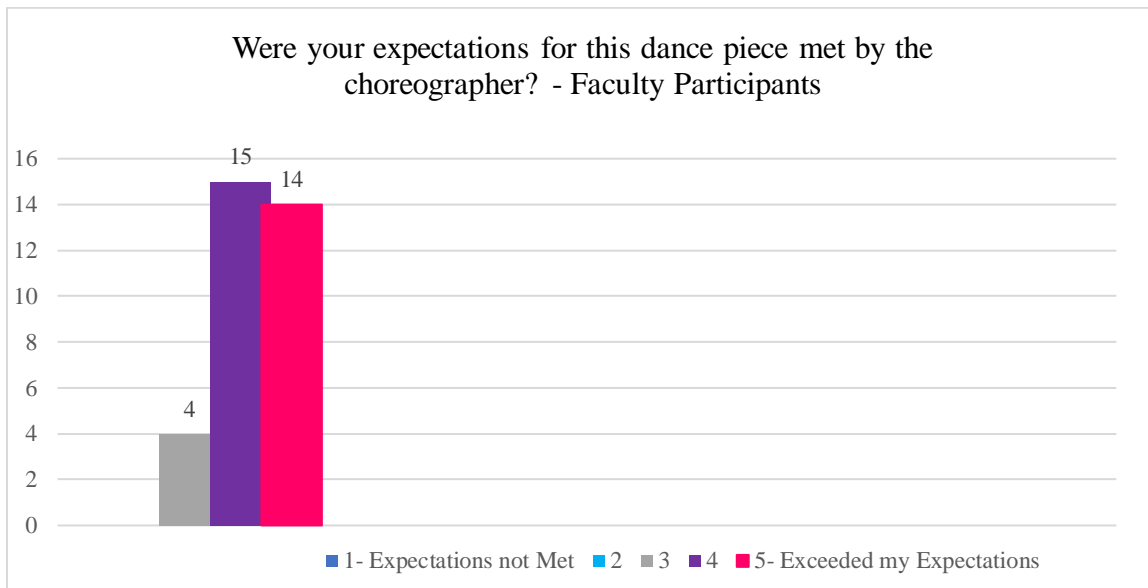


Figure 7. Were your expectations for the dance piece met by the choreographer?

Figure 8 provides the responses to the same question but from the participants for the student choreographers.

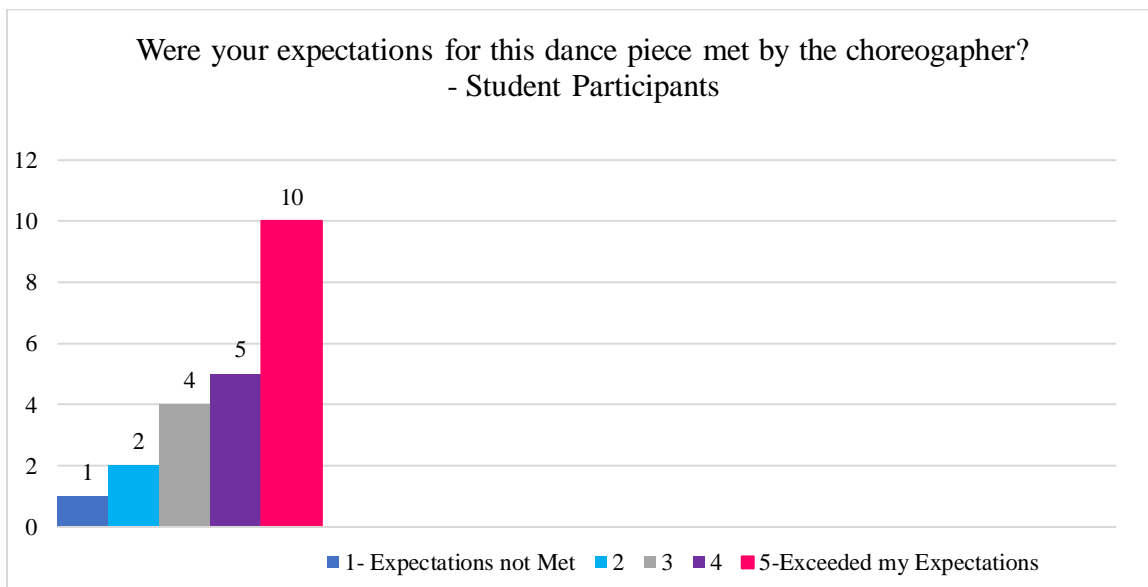


Figure 8. Were your expectations for the dance piece met by the choreographer?

The remaining questions on the participant exit survey posed as inquiries to better understand who the participant was as a dancer and were not used as data for this research. The next set of data that was analyzed involved the participants' levels of engagement at the beginning of the choreography process and then again at the end. The data was collected through the distribution of the participant self-assessment.

Participant Self-Assessment Engagement Analysis

The researcher created the participant self-assessment as a tool for the participants to rate their levels of engagement within the choreography process. The researcher distributed the self-assessment twice throughout the process, once when rehearsals first began and then again when the choreography had been completed. The participants were provided with face stickers to place on their self-assessments to emulate their feelings during that stage in the process. There was a portion meant for participants to indicate through free writing why they may have felt the way they did on the bottom of their self-assessments. Unfortunately, none of the participants elected to respond so only quantitative data was acknowledged. Each participant's self-assessment form was coded with an alpha or alphanumeric code for the researcher to cross-exam the participants engagement levels versus their responses on their participant exit surveys. The participants responded to two questions listed on the self-assessments. The first question asked, "how engaged or connected are you with the choreography," and the second question read, "were the choreographic devices helpful or inspiring throughout the rehearsal?"

The participant responses were rated across a three-point rubric scale and then placed into tables. The green smiley faces were given three points, the yellow faces were assigned

two points, and the red upset faces were given one point. Table 1 displays the participants responses for questions one and two for both assessments. The first table displays the responses for the faculty choreographers' participants.

Table 1: Student Self-Assessment Results 1 and 2, Faculty Choreographers

Participant Code	Pre Q1	Pre Q2	Post Q1	Post Q2
A	3	3	3	3
B	3	3	3	3
C	3	3	3	3
D	3	3	3	3
E	3	3	3	3
F	2	2	2	3
G	3	2	3	3
H	3	3	3	3
I	3	3	3	3
J	3	2	2	3
K	3	2	3	2
L	3	3	3	3
M	3	3	3	3
N	2	2	3	3
O	3	3	3	3
P	3	2	2	3
Q	3	3	3	3
R	3	2	3	2
S	3	3	3	3
T	3	3	3	3
U	3	3	3	3
V	3	3	3	3
W	3	3	3	3
X	3	3	3	3
Y	3	3	3	3
Z	3	2	3	3
A1	3	2	3	3
B1	3	3	3	3
C1	3	3	3	3
D1	3	3	3	3
E1	3	3	3	3
F1	2	2	3	3
G1	3	2	3	2

The same two questions and rubric were used for the student choreographed pieces and the participant self-assessment was also administered twice. Table 2 indicates the responses from the student choreographers' participants.

Table 2: Student Self-Assessment Results 1 and 2, Student Choreographers

Participant Code	Pre Q1	Pre Q2	Post Q1	Post Q2
A-S	2	3	3	2
B-S	3	3	3	3
C-S	2	2	1	2
D-S	3	2	3	3
E-S	2	3	2	3
G-S	1	1	3	3
H-S	3	3	3	3
J-S	2	3	3	3
K-S	3	3	3	3
L-S	1	3	3	3
M-S	3	2	3	2
N-S	2	3	3	3
O-S	3	3	3	3
P-S	3	3	3	3
Q-S	3	3	3	3
R-S	1	3	2	3
S-S	3	3	3	3
T-S	3	3	3	3
U-S	2	3	3	3
V-S	3	3	3	3
Y-S	3	3	3	3
Z-S	3	3	3	3

Once the researcher had documented all the recorded responses for engagement levels, charts were created to provide visual percentages of the participants' responses. Figure 9 illustrates the overall participant engagement levels throughout the choreography process for the faculty choreographers. Sixty-seven percent of participants

indicated that they were completely engaged throughout the entire process, while the remaining thirty-three percent reported that they were somewhat engaged throughout but completely engaged by the end of the choreography process.

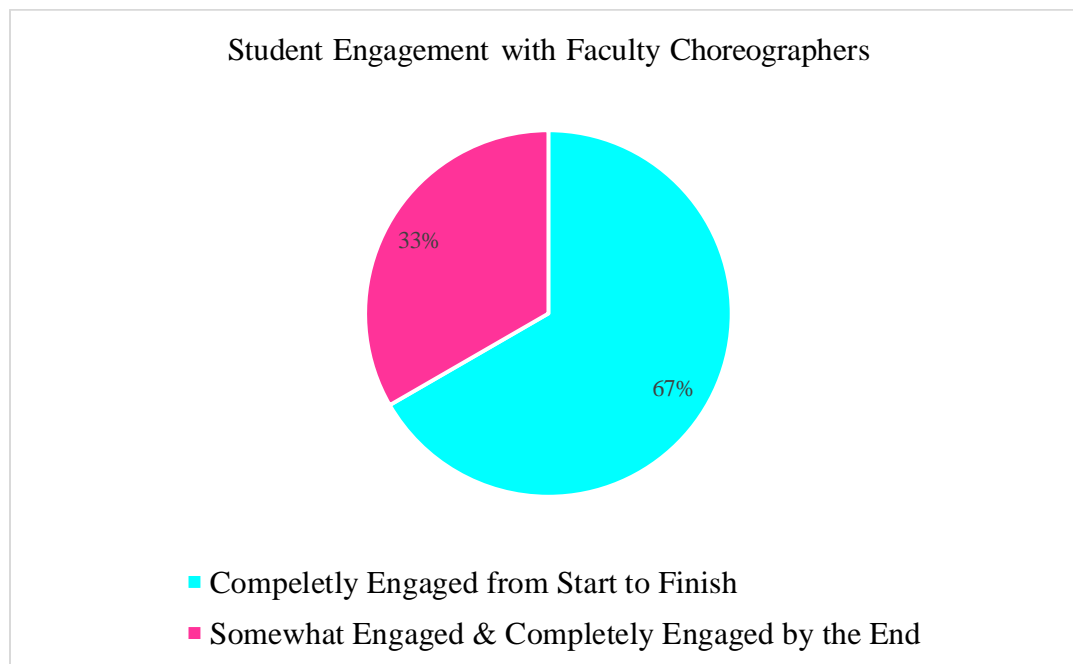


Figure 9. Student Engagement Levels – Faculty Choreographers

Figure 10 demonstrates the overall participants' engagement levels throughout the choreography process for the student choreographers. Forty-five percent of participants indicated that they were completely engaged throughout the entire process, forty-one percent reported that they were somewhat engaged throughout but completely engaged by the end of the choreography process, nine percent reported that they were completely disengaged throughout but completely engaged by the end, and the remaining five percent indicated that they were completely engaged at the beginning but were only somewhat engaged by the end.

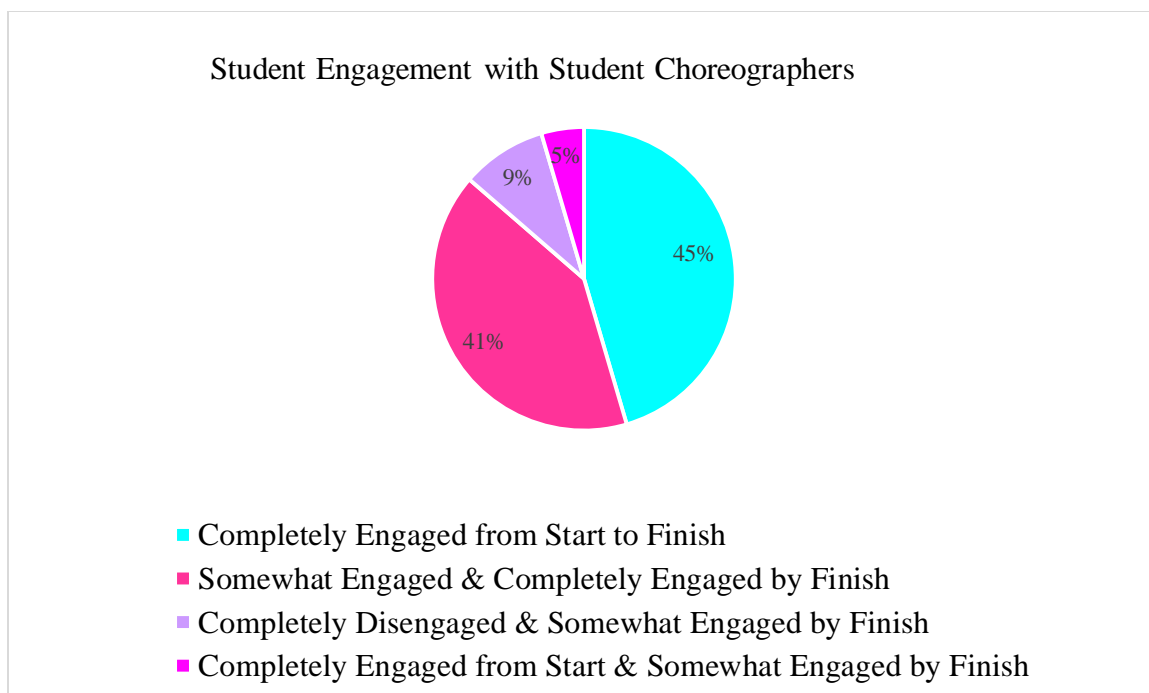


Figure 10. Student Engagement Levels – Student Choreographers

Faculty and student choreographers received the highest level of engagement from participants from start to finish; however, the student choreographers received feedback stating that they were both disengaged from the choreography at some point throughout the process as well as not feeling completely engaged in the end. The feedback indicated to the researcher that the participants may not have particularly cared for the choreographer's personality or teaching style, the choreographic devices being used, the other performers in the piece, or perhaps the choreography itself.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate if choreographic devices had an impact on student engagement levels throughout the choreography process. This research also investigated the notion that student choreographers may engage and excite their dancers in a different manner than the faculty choreographers that they learn from. The research involved forty-two participant dancers across two different semesters at a junior college. The information utilized in the research only consisted of quantitative data and was collected from a participant self-assessment and a participant exit survey. The aim of the study was to answer three essential questions:

- Q1 Did utilization of specific choreographic devices impact overall student engagement and choreography outcomes?
- Q2 Were there significant differences between faculty and student exploration when creating choreography?
- Q3 Did these differences enhance or diminish student engagement?

Research Findings

The study has shown that the use of choreographic devices throughout the choreography process does create a positive correlation with student engagement levels. The data presented indicated that most participants among both sets of choreographers were unfortunately unaware of what the choreographic devices being used were. This result indicates that the participants were more engaged with the choreography and the

choreographer versus the tools being utilized to teach the material. A useful parameter that should have been incorporated within this research would have been to only select participants who were familiar with choreographic devices and their utilization within choreography. Unfortunately, this type of specialized request of the participants would have limited the number of dancers able to participate. The research was conducted at a junior college where most everyone is welcomed into the dance department classes and concerts once auditioned. Perhaps revisiting this research within a focused dance department, with just dance majors at a four-year university would provide different responses.

When examining the choreographic devices that were reported, the researcher discovered that the faculty choreographers used more creativity within their choices compared to that of the predetermined student choreographers. The student choreographers stayed true to textbook choreographic devices and the only overlap between both groups was the use of repetition. The use of improvisation was only explored by the student choreographers at a reported nine percent. Previous research indicates that well-structured choreography must always begin from a place of improvisation (Lavender, *Creative Process* 9); however, the esteemed faculty choreographers did not utilize this opportunity according to the participants. Perhaps the use of improvisation does not always have to be implemented when teaching or creating choreography, but can be a suggested choreographic device. Improvisation can also be utilized in preparation for creating work independently but may not always be used in the presence of the dancers.

Limitations for the Study

Although there was a positive correlation between the use of choreographic devices and dancer's engagement levels, there were a few limitations from the study including: use of non-dance majors, dancers who were not familiar with choreographic devices, and a lack of reliability and validity of the instruments. It would be beneficial to repeat the research with participants attending a four-year university as a dance major. This would secure a foundational understanding of the use of choreographic devices within the choreography process and how they can affect engagement levels. The researcher created all instruments used to collect data within the study, but after further assessment of the tools used, different questions should have been asked on a pre-survey to select a more focused participant pool. More research should be conducted to help support the notion that choreographic devices and choices made throughout the choreography process impact student engagement levels.

Recommendations for Further Research

The data analyzed for the research suggests a positive relationship between choreographic devices used by faculty and student choreographers and student engagement levels. However, further research should be conducted to scale down and focus on specific choreographic devices and how their use or possible overuse impacts student engagement levels. It was posed at the beginning of the research that the use of improvisation may be an apparently overused choreographic device by many choreographers. The data received by the participants in this research indicated otherwise. Improvisation was almost non-existent between both sets of choreographers. Perhaps the use of improvisation in preparation for choreography may often be used

outside the presence of the dancers. Choreographers may be using this choreographic device to begin the building stages of their work, but may not always need or desire its presence with the performers. Possibly identifying choreographic devices individually within the choreography process and defining their purpose within the movement would help to decipher how excited or engaged dancers are to use them. The researcher believes there is still much to be learned about the choreographic process and how its presentation to the performers truly impacts the overall outcome of the work.

Conclusion

This research has shown that there is a clear connection between a choreographer's use of choreographic devices and student engagement levels. This research has also stated that although dancers may have previous experience with learning choreography, they may not have prior knowledge or understanding of what choreographic devices are and how they are utilized throughout the process. What this research has not shown is that student choreographers are more innovative and creative than their faculty advisors, that choreographic devices diminish the rehearsal process, or that the use of improvisation is always utilized when creating choreography. The researcher has acquired a stronger admiration for the choreography process and the balance that must be met between the choreographer, the movement, and the performers for successful work.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

APPROVAL LETTER

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: November 7, 2018

TO: Erika Goe
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1328986-2] Choreography, Student Engagement, and
Conclusions: Assessing if Faculty Choreographers are as
innovative as the Students, they Teach.

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: November 7, 2018

EXPIRATION DATE: November 7, 2022

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern

Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB

regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu.

Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of

Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Choreography, Students Engagement, and Conclusions: Assessing if Faculty Choreographers are as Innovative as the Students they Teach.

Researcher: Erika Goe, Graduate Student at the University of Northern Colorado

Research Advisor: Professor Christy O'Connell-Black

Email: Christy.Oconellblack@unco.edu

Email: goe4785@bears.unco.edu

Purpose and Description: I am asking you to take part in a research study about accessing the effectiveness of choreographic devices and how it impacts student engagement when learning choreography. I am trying to evaluate if choreographic devices have an impact on student engagement by evaluating the following questions: (1) Does utilization of specific choreographic devices impact overall student engagement and choreography outcomes? (2) Are there significant differences between faculty and student exploration when creating choreography? And (3) Do these differences enhance or diminish student engagement?

You have been selected to take part because you are registered in the repertoire class to participate in the dance department concert. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a student self-assessment and student exit survey. Both instruments will take less than ten minutes to complete. The student self-assessment will be administered twice; once half-way through the choreography process and again when complete. The student exit survey will be administered once the choreography has been completed.

The risks in this study are no greater than those normally encountered during regular dance class participation. The teacher will make every effort to warm you up properly to avoid injury. You will be instructed to let the teacher know ahead of time if you have an injury or other reason you cannot participate in an activity. If you participate, you agree to take on all risks involved, and the teacher, college, and dance studio are not liable.

I will keep the records of this study private. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A code system will be used to identify all participant responses including the student self-assessments and student exit surveys. All documents pertaining to this study will be stored in a locked cabinet in

Crabbe Hall, room 308, the office of Dance Education MA co-coordinator Christy O'Connell-Black. When the study is over, the notes and data will be destroyed.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____ Date _____

Researcher Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C
RESEARCHER JOURNAL

Spring Researcher Journal Template

Day Choreography

Date

Participants in piece:

Participants in study:

Journal Entry / Week

Start of rehearsal:

Choreographic Plan for the rehearsal:

Choreographic Devices:

Student Engagement:

Choreographers Ending notes:

APPENDIX D
STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Student Self-Assessment 1__ or 2__
Date: _____

Choreographers Name: _____

Student Self-Assessment 1__ or 2__
Date: _____

Choreographers Name: _____

How engaged or connected are you with the choreography? Please check one.



Please explain your reasoning for your selection: _____

Were the choreographic devices helpful or inspiring throughout the rehearsals?



Please explain your reasoning for your selection: _____

Thank you for your input!

How engaged or connected are you with the choreography? Please check one.



Please explain your reasoning for your selection: _____

Were the choreographic devices helpful or inspiring throughout the rehearsals?



Please explain your reasoning for your selection: _____

Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX E
STUDENT EXIT SURVERY

Student Exit Survey

Choreographic Devices

This is an anonymous survey to assess the choreographic devices used by the choreographer throughout the rehearsal process.

Please identify your level of dance experience/training.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Please indicate your previous experience with learning choreography.

1 2 3 4 5

No Experience

Experienced

Did your choreographer...

Explain what the dance piece was about? Yes | No

Explore different methods of choreographing? Yes | No

Provide a specific device to choreograph? Yes | No

If so, please explain:

Use a device that was exciting or useful? Yes | No

Please explain:

Keep the choreography process engaging? Yes | No

Come to rehearsal prepared? Yes | No

What was your engagement level **before** learning the work?

1 2 3 4 5

Not Engaged

Completely Engaged

What was your engagement level **during** learning the work?

1 2 3 4 5

Not Engaged

Completely Engaged

What is your engagement level **now** that the work is complete?

1 2 3 4 5

Not Engaged

Completely Engaged

Were your expectations for this dance piece met by the choreographer?

1 2 3 4 5

Expectations not Met

Exceeded my Expectations

Please briefly explain what your expectations were for this dance piece.

Have you previously worked with this choreographer before?

Yes | No

Would you work with this choreographer again?

Yes | No

How many other dance pieces are you participating in this fall?

1-2 other dance pieces 2-3 other dance pieces

3-4 other dance pieces None

Additional comments:

Choreographers Name:

Thank you for your input and participation within this research.