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Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer: A Study on the Effect of Improvisation Dance on Emotions

Marina Karver

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Dance 461: Senior Thesis Project

Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer
A study on the effect of Improvisation Dance on Emotions

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Mentors:
Professor Judith Scalin
Dr. Adam Fingerhut

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In partial fulfillment of
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance
Loyola Marymount University
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Short Description of Project

Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer

A study on the effect of Improvisational Dance on Emotions

By: Marina S. Karver

Mentors:

Professor Judith Scalin

Dr. Adam Fingerhut

Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer is an experimental research thesis. My project was designed to learn how improvisational dance might act as a stress buffer. I led half the participants through a guided improvisational dance class, and the other half through an exercise class. I hypothesized that participating in a guided improvisational dance class (more so than an exercise class) should allow people to physically overcome some of the emotional conditions they may be dealing with, holding them back from living an ideally emotionally stable life.

A second goal of this study was to determine whether dance was a more or less effective stress buffer for dancers as compared to non-dancers. Though dancers may often use physical movement as a way to express their frustrations, dance may be just as effective of a stress buffer for non-dancers. In this research, I hoped to investigate how dance affects stress, and whether or not it affects dancers differently than non-dancers.

Results showed a trend that improvisational dance was more effective in the face of stress for dance majors as compared to non-dance majors, which may be due to the fact that dancers are used to using dance as an outlet for their negative emotions, such as stress. In contrast, for non-dance majors, improvisational dance might be something that is out of their comfort zone, causing them to feel even more stress. In the same manner in which dance is more often used as a stress buffer by dance majors, exercise may be a more common stress buffer for non-dance majors.

Inspiration and Personal Reflection leading to Choice of Research Study

Through my time here at LMU and my studies in psychology I have always been curious as to what is the seat of emotions in the brain and how emotions get brought about in the brain. Emotions are such a common aspect of our everyday life. They often control our actions without us knowing. Often emotions from the past are buried through defense mechanisms and come up later in our lives. It has always been interesting to me that people manage to forget about their childhood, masking it with made up images of a perfect childhood. It also awes me that years later they continue to ignore their past even when issues begin to arise that are clearly results of this buried past. These masked emotions in extreme cases result in mental illnesses such as multi personality disorder or borderline personality disorder. How is it that the seat of emotions in the brain can hold these fears and distresses for so many years without any sign of influence and then one day the side effects begins to emerge?

In a memoir I read this summer about a patient that had recovered from borderline personality disorder, I read that what often helped this specific patient push through hard emotional times and crisis's was building adrenaline through exercising, specifically through jogging or running. I found it so interesting that just running for an hour a day really helped her push though her outrages of anger and sometimes depression.

At this point in the memoir I began to realize that I too use this method to often help control my emotions, even though they may not be to the same extreme. No matter how sad or angry I am when I walk in to a dance class, I usually walk out forgetting why I felt like that originally and feeling much better. The adrenaline I gain from dancing really helps wash away any stresses that I may have had before. This then leads me to question the role of the seat of emotions on the brain and cognitive emotions in relation to

dance. There must be some connection to the freedom one feels while dancing in the studio to the release of emotions. In turn, these thoughts have also made me question what role does movement specifically play in the stimulation of emotions. Is there a connection between the integration of thinking and feeling with dancing? And, how does dance influence thinking, emotions, and cognition?

With all these questions I discovered in beginning to think about my research project I have formed a basic outline of what I would like to discover throughout this year not only in my studies in my psychology major, but also through the continuation of my studies and exploration through yoga and dance. With this project I want to define what is the specific reason that I feel such a connection between my two majors. I want to find a clear connection between the seat of emotions in the brain and cognitive emotions and how they are affected by dance and movement as well as how dance and movement affect emotions.

Written Discourse/ Manuscript of Study

Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer

Marina Karver

Loyola Marymount University

Abstract

Previous studies have reported that practices such as yoga or meditation may act as a stress buffer. This experiment looked at a relationship between dancers and non-dancers and how improvisational dance affects their stress levels, in comparison to physical exercise. Forty-nine college students participated in a 2X2 person by situation quasi-experimental design, in which the first variable was whether or not the participant was a dance major or not. Completing a self-report reflection on what was currently stressing out each participant induced stress. Participants were then randomly assigned to participate in one of two conditions: an improvisational dance class or a physical exercise class. The Satisfaction of Life Survey and the PANAS were used to categorize participant's stress level at the end of the study. Results showed no significant main effect of dancer on Satisfaction with Life scores. Similarly, there was no main effect of improvisational dance. However, results did show an interaction suggesting a trend of exercise working better for non-dance majors in the face of stress than for dance majors.

Improvisational Dance as a Stress Buffer

Stress and frustration are very common in everyday life. They can result from tiny mishaps throughout the day, or bigger problems such as financial difficulties or family struggles. Finding an outlet for stress is often difficult for people. When people can't find a proper method of stress buffering, they may hold in their emotions, which in the long run may cause emotional instability. In order to thrive, people have to learn to develop a coping mechanism; otherwise, they may experience detrimental consequences of stress.

That said, there remain some people who, despite their best efforts, do struggle to understand how important it is to express their feelings. People who cannot find a proper outlet for their stress may find themselves coping with a mechanism that is not healthy, such as suppressing their emotions. Mark P. Zanna (1992) describes suppression as the intentional and conscious removal of a thought or feeling from our conscious awareness. In doing so, people may think they are free from the emotion but in fact the person is just stuck between a sense of freedom and a sense of limitation. Therefore, people need to find a better and more effective form of stress buffering.

Research has shown that physical exercise can often act as a stress buffer. A study done by Brown and Siegel (1988) supports this notion. The researchers examined the association between stressful life events and ill health. They investigated the role of exercise as a way to reduce the negative impact of stress. Participants, consisting of junior high and high school students, completed a life events survey. The scale consists of 20-stress provoking circumstances. The items on the scale were developed by interviewing children about daily stressors. The participants also completed a version of the Seriousness of Illness Rating Scale to measure their physical health. Specifically, the

scale assessed illness ranging from a cold or a sore throat to cancer or diabetes. Participants indicated which of the conditions they had experienced in the past year. Lastly, participants completed a self-report questionnaire on the amount of physical activity they engage in. Results showed that lower stress levels resulted in better health. Results also showed that stress levels decrease as exercise levels increase. These results support the notion that exercise can act as a stress buffer.

For many years now, it has been suggested that exercise may have an acute affect on buffering physiological responses to stress, such as blood pressure and heart rate. Further research done by Rejeski, Thompson, Brubaker, and Miller (1992) also suggests that exercise acts as a buffer for stress response. This study took a more behavioral approach to assessing exercise, actually having participants partake in physical activity. Forty-eight women were randomly assigned at the onset of the study to either partake in a control group or in an exercise intervention group. In the control group, researchers measured percent body fat of the participants. The women also completed a self-report questionnaire describing their level of physical activity during the past year. In the exercise intervention group, women completed the Astrand-Rhyming submaximal exercise test (a stationary bicycle exercise). Following both conditions, the Stroop task was administered as a stressor. The second stressor was a public speaking task. Participants then completed the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List- Revised, in which they simply checked off adjectives that described their feelings. This instrument consisted of 132 adjectives which measured their anxiety level, including depression, hostility, positive affect, and sensation seeking. Results showed that women who participated in the aerobic exercise showed reduced anxiety, as well as reduced heart rate and blood

pressure, to the demanding interpersonal task of giving a public speech. These findings specifically suggest that exercise lowers the stress level in women who are about to perform a psychosocial stress exercise, specifically here, public speaking. Even though in this study exercise was pre-stressor, it is still interesting to see the effect that exercise had on a future encounter with stress.

Although over the years exercise has proven to be an effective stress buffer, recently research has suggested that meditation and mindfulness based yoga practice can also act as stress buffers. According to Kabat-Zinn (2005) mindfulness is a simple concept in which one pays attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. His concept on mindfulness meditation has the intention to be fully aware of all thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. This kind of attention brings about more awareness, clarity, and acceptance in a person life. Shapiro, Schwartz, and Bonner (1998) studied Kabat-Zinn's concept of mindfulness and its effect on stress, specifically in medical students. Participants were randomly assigned to either partake in a 7-week mindfulness-based intervention group or a control group. Those who participated in the mindfulness intervention received training for the following meditation practices: sitting meditation, body scan, hatha yoga, and mindful breathing. All participants were then asked to take various scales measuring empathy, psychological distress, depression, state and trait anxiety, and spirituality. Results showed that compared to the control group, those who had participated in the mindfulness intervention program showed significantly reduced self-reports of overall psychological distress including depression, reduced self-reported state and trait anxiety, increased

empathy, and increased scores on the measure of spirituality. These findings suggest that allowing oneself to be mindful does act as a stress buffer.

Yoga, a more specific type of mindfulness practice was also found to be a stress buffer in a study done by Granath, Ingvarsson, von Thiele, and Lundberg (2006). In this study, participants were either involved in cognitive behavior therapy or a yoga program. The CBT focused on stress-related topics and management methods, whereas the yoga program focused on personal goals, breathing, body posture, meditation and mantra knowledge and intuition. Stress levels were measured before and after both programs. Results showed that both CBT and the yoga program had statistically significant reduction of scores on a stress-related variable. Although there was not a significant difference in which method worked better, this gives light to the idea that yoga therapy is just as effective of a stress buffer as a major type of therapy.

In the current study, I intend to take the above-mentioned research a step further. What if one was to combine the physicality of exercise with the mindfulness of yoga, in something such as an improvisational dance class? The current research aims to suggest that dance can serve as an outlet for emotions, specifically stress or frustration. Participating in a guided improvisational dance class should allow people to physically overcome some of the emotional conditions they may be dealing with, holding them back from living an emotionally stable life. The physicality as well as the mindfulness of this type of exercise should result in reducing some of the stress of daily life.

A second goal of this study is to determine whether dance is a stress buffer more so for dancers than non-dancers. Though dancers may often find physical movement as a way to express their frustrations, dance may be just as effective of a stress buffer for non-

dancers. In this research, I hope to investigate how dance affects stress, and whether or not it affects dancers more than non-dancers.

This study used a 2X2 person by situation quasi-experimental design. The first variable was whether the person was a dancer or a non-dancer. The dancer condition was determined by whether or not the participant was a dance major at Loyola Marymount University. For the second variable, participants were randomly assigned to either participate in a guided improvisational dance class or a guided exercise class. At the beginning of the study, stress was induced with the participants completing a written self-reflection on something that was currently stressing them out. Participants then engaged in either an improvisational dance class or an exercise class. To measure stress at the conclusion of the study, participants completed two separate questionnaires concerning their satisfaction with life as well as negative affect. The research aims to answer whether improvisational dance will be more effective of a stress buffer than an exercise class. The research findings will also answer a second explanatory question of whether the improvisational dance class acted more as stress buffer to dancers or to non-dancers.

Method

Participants

Participants involved were 47 women and two men recruited either from the Loyola Marymount University Chapter of Alpha Phi or were students enrolled in an advanced modern dance class. The ages ranged from 18-22 ($M = 19.75$, $SD = 1.03$). The ethnicities included Caucasian (61.0%), African American (5.1%), Hispanic/Latino (5.1%), Asian (3.4%), Pacific Islander (3.4%), and other (5.1%). For the dance majors,

incentive for participating in the study was not having an absence in class for the day. For the member of Alpha Phi Sorority, they were given incentive of one service hour.

Materials and Procedure

Participants willing to volunteer first read and signed an Informed Consent and Human Subjects Bill of Rights. In order to induce stress, participants were instructed to journal for four minutes on a piece of paper distributed to them by the researchers on a topic that was currently causing them stress. To measure the manipulation of stress at the beginning of the study, participants completed a short version of The PANAS, which listed adjectives and participants responded by circling the number on a five point Likert scale (1=very slightly or not at all, 5=extremely) that best described how they were currently feeling. "Stress" was one of the words on this scale. They also filled out a demographics questionnaire that inquired about the participant's age, gender, and race.

Participants were then randomly assigned to either move into an adjacent dance studio to participate in an improvisational dance class, or to stay in the current dance studio and participate in an exercise class.

During the improvisational dance class, participant's first began by standing still with their eyes closed. In line with mindfulness meditation, they were instructed to listen to all the sounds of the room, and to pick one specific sound and drain the other sounds out. They were then instructed in various ways to move and dance in a way they pictured that the sound they were hearing would move. Participants were given various movement cues as well, such as move sharply, or concentrate on the flow between your transitions from shape to shape.

During the exercise class, participants were instructed in doing exercises such as push-ups, jumping jacks, and toe touches across the floor. The exercise class lasted ten minutes, which was just as long as the duration of the improvisational class. Different researchers led the two conditions. However, specific scripts were given to standardize each condition as to avoid a confound.

Immediately following either the exercise class or the improvisational dance class, participants completed two measures to assess level of stress. A full version of the PANAS was distributed, in which participants rated how they were currently feeling; words included *irritable*, *enthusiastic*, *nervous*, and *attentive*, among others. Participants then completed the Satisfaction with Life Survey. In this scale participants rated how strongly they agreed with specific statements, such as "In most ways my life is close to ideal" and participants responded on the same five point Likert scale (1=very slightly or not at all, 5=extremely). After the experiment was over the researchers thoroughly debriefed the participants.

Results

In terms of negative affect, results showed that there was no difference on negative affect scores depending on if participants were dancers or not $F(1, 45) = 1.55, p > .05$. Additionally, there was no main effect of improvisational dance on negative affect scores, $F(1, 45) = 1.33, p > .05$. In other words, there was no difference in negative affect scores for those who exercised versus those who did improvisational dance.

There was a marginally significant interaction in predicting negative affect, $F(1, 45) = 3.07, p < .1$. Follow up t-tests were done to explore this interaction. For dance majors, doing improvisational dance led to lower scores on negative affect in the face of

stress than did regular exercise, $t(32) = 2.43, p < .05$. For non-dance majors, there was no difference in negative affect based on whether they exercised or danced, $t(13) = -.45, p > .05$.

In terms of Satisfaction with Life, results showed that there was no difference on scores depending on if participants were dancers or not, $F(1, 45) = .23, p > .05$.

Additionally, there was no main effect of improvisational dance on Satisfaction with Life scores, $F(1, 45) = .38, p > .05$. In other words, there was no difference in Satisfaction with Life scores for those who exercised versus those who did improvisational dance.

There was an interaction, $F(1, 45) = 5.58, p < .05$. Follow up t-tests were done to explore this interaction. Because of small sample sizes, the tests were not significant but revealed trends. For dance majors, doing improvisational dance led to higher scores on Satisfaction with Life in the face of stress than did regular exercise, $t(32) = -1.58, p = .13$. For non-dance majors it is the opposite; exercise led to higher Satisfaction with Life scores than did dance, $t(13) = 1.77, p = .10$.

Discussion

In this study, I attempted to find if improvisational dance would be more of a stress buffer than regular exercise. I then attempted to find if improvisational dance was more effective for dancers as compared to non-dancers. There was no main effect of improvisational dance on Satisfaction with Life scores. Similarly, results showed no significant main effect of dancer on Satisfaction with Life scores. Lastly, results did show a significant interaction, suggesting a trend of exercise working better for non-dance majors in the face of stress on the Satisfaction with Life scale, but for improvisational dance there is no difference. For dance majors, improvisational dance really seemed to be

work; it was significantly reducing their negative affect and the trend is it was doing something to better their scores on the Satisfaction with Life scale. Also, for dance majors, improvisational dance lead to less negative affect than exercise did; whereas for non-dance majors improvisational dance did nothing more than exercise in regards to negative affect. The tests for the Satisfaction with Life Scale showed a similar pattern in regards to dance majors: improvisational dance was more effective than exercise, but the findings are only marginally significant. In contrast to negative affect results, in the Satisfaction with Life Scale, exercise may be working more positively for non-dance majors than improvisational dance.

The research mentioned earlier by Brown et al., (1988) and Rejeski et al., (1992) showed that stress levels decrease as exercise levels increase, which in turn leads to better health. The current study reflects these findings demonstrating that exercise was a marginally significant stress buffer for some people, specifically non-dance majors. However, contrary to the previously mentioned study, the current research also showed that stress was not a significant stress buffer for dance-majors.

Research mentioned above by Granath et al., (2006) and Shapiro (1998) showed that yoga practice and the use of mindfulness had statistically significant reduction of scores on stress-related variable. The current research study supports these findings in that there was a trend that improvisational dance was more effective in the face of stress for dance majors as compared to non-dance majors, which may be due to the fact that dancers are used to using dance as an outlet for their negative emotions, such as stress. It could be that they have learned in their years of dance training to use this idea of mindfulness-based thinking, often seen in yoga and improvisational dance as a stress

buffering mechanism. In contrast, for non-dance majors, improvisational dance might be something that is out of their comfort zone, causing them to feel even more stress. In the same manner in which dance is probably more often used as a stress buffer by dance majors, exercise may be a more common stress buffer for non-dance majors.

Nonetheless, because these results were only marginally significant they only suggest a trend in the use of improvisational dance versus exercise as stress buffers.

Future research on the topic should take in to consideration some of the limitations encountered in the current study. First, there were many more dance major participants than non-dance major participants. Future research should try to have a more balanced ratio of dancer to non-dancer participants. Also, this study looked primarily at women, due to the lack of men in both the sorority and the Loyola Marymount dance program. It would also be interesting if future research attempted a different method of inducing stress. The nonsignificant results in this study may have been due to the fact that participants were not initially stressed out enough. It could be better to induce stress in a different manner that would have more effect, such as the participants having to give a public speech as done in the previously mentioned research. More results in regards to this topic may provide significant findings and a clearer understanding of how improvisational dance can act as a stress buffer.

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Appendices

Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Marina Karver from Loyola Marymount University under the faculty sponsorship of Adam Fingerhut, Ph.D. and Judith Scalin, both also from Loyola Marymount University.

For this study: You were selected as a possible participant because you are at least 18 years of age.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and your decision whether or not to participate will not adversely affect you.

Purpose of the Study

We are a team of researchers interested in understanding physical activity and its relationship to people's attitudes.

In order to examine these issues, we will be asking you to participate in a physical activity and to then complete a questionnaire (taking about 5 minutes) regarding various attitudes.

Once you have completed the surveys, you will be done participating in this study and will be debriefed.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

You will be asked to do physical exercise, however, no movement or exercise will be too difficult and you are asked to move at your own capability and risk.

Potential Benefits to Participants and/or Society

Although you may not necessarily receive any direct benefits from this study, we hope to understand more about the link between behavior and cognition.

Will I be paid?

You will not receive any payment for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

The questionnaire is completely anonymous, meaning you will not be required to include identifying information. None of your answers will be able to be traced back to you.

Participation and Withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You also may refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the investigators by email: Marina Karver at [REDACTED] or Adam Fingerhut at [REDACTED] or Judith Scalin at judith.scalin@lmu.edu.

Rights of Research Participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Hardy, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 [REDACTED]

In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature _____

Date _____

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24172, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

1. I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.
2. I will be given an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the medical experiment, and any drug or device to be utilized.
3. I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.
4. I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.
5. I will be given a disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures, drugs or devices that might be advantageous and their relative risks and benefits.
6. I will be informed of the avenues of medical treatment, if any, available after the study is completed if complications should arise.
7. I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.
8. I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.
9. I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.
10. I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

Study Script

Hand out informed consent.

Stressing out the participants:

Acting casual/nonchalant

“So pretty much I am doing this study to look at cognition and movement; basically meaning I am looking at the way people think and the way they move. Were going to be doing a few exercises to see kind of what’s going on in the mind and what’s going on in the body. So lets start with some thinking. I’m going to have you free write for a couple of minutes. I don’t really care what you write about and it will be completely anonymous, so you can write about anything. I’m more interested in the structure of the writing, so write in full sentences. Actually, I guess let’s be consistent and all write about the same emotion. Hmmm... Well midterms are coming up which is pretty stressful... Let’s write about something that is stressing you out. Maybe it’s midterms; maybe it’s a boyfriend, maybe its family problems. I don’t care whatever you want. I’m less concerned with content and more concerned with how your structure your thoughts.”

Hand out writing paper.

Time 2 minutes.

Collect papers, hand out demographics/mini stress questionnaire.

“Please fill out the information on this page.”

Collect demographics/questionnaire.

*People with * at the top of their paper will go to studio A for improvisational dance class, people with @ on their paper will go to studio B for exercise class.*

Conduct dance class or exercise class.

“Now if you would all please fill out the following questionnaires. These questionnaires are anonymous and will in no way be tied back to you so please be as honest as you can.”

Hand out PANAS and Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Improvisational Dance class:

Now let's begin to move and dance. Listen to the sounds of the room and pick one specific sound you hear. Allow it to be louder than all the other noises in the room. How would that one specific sound dance?

Put spirit, conviction, and enthusiasm into your dance. Shake, turn, and move to the sound you are hearing. Intensity doesn't necessarily mean speed, though. A slow motion can be every bit as intense and deliberate as a quick one. Notice moves and ways of moving between one step to another. Begin to experiment with levels. How does the transition from standing to the floor differ from the transition from the floor to standing?

Begin to make shapes with you body, try moving between each shape slowly, holding each shape for 2 or 3 seconds. Think about the movements and shaped you are making, focusing on how your body reacts to the movement. When your elbow moves first how does you spine react? When you lead with your foot how does your head respond?

Wait 1 minute.

Now begin to move between shapes more briskly with a sharp force. Hold each shape for 2 to 3 seconds. Continue to focus on how each body part makes another more distant body part move.

Wait 1 minute.

Now switch off between the slow, flowing transition between shape and a sharper, quicker transition. Again how does the switching between transition styles make the body flow from shape to shape?

Wait 1 minute.

Now begin to move from high levels to low levels. Pick whatever transition style you want between movements. No longer think of making shapes, but think of making a fluid transition from high levels to low levels back to high. Allow your body to move in whatever way and direction it wants.

Now begin to settle down. Make a final slow transition to standing. Face any direction and close your eyes. What feelings are you experiencing? What emotions have arisen? Take a deep breath in... and out. Open your eyes when you are ready.

Wait 1 minute.

Exercise class

Jumping jacks for a minute

10 Push-ups, either full plank push ups, or knees on the ground.

Planks

- Hold for a minute.
- Lower to child's pose, 30 sec
- Back to plank, lift the right foot up for 30 seconds, switch and hold the left foot up for 30 seconds.

Fake jump rope for a minute, 30-second break, do another minute

Run in place for a minute as fast as they can: called "quick feet"

Lunges --straight out to the front, feet meeting in the middle and switching feet, 3 sets of 10.

Scissor switch jumps, set of 20.

Crunches: hundreds.

Side planks, 30 seconds on each side, lowering and lifting the top leg.

Kicks across the floor: kick up and touch toe with opposite hand.

Squat then jump (do this repeatedly so when you land from the jump you go back into the squat). Set of 15.

High knees across the floor.

Football side shuffles.

Walk around the room for a minute to cool off.

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then circle the appropriate number. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers. Please circle the number that best describes how you currently feel.

	1 very slightly or not at all	2 a little	3 moderately	4 quite a bit	5 extremely
Thoughtful	1	2	3	4	5
Stressed	1	2	3	4	5
Anxious	1	2	3	4	5
Worried	1	2	3	4	5
Happy	1	2	3	4	5

Please fill out the following information:

AGE: _____

GENDER: (please circle one)

male female unidentified

ETHNICITY: (please circle one)

Caucasian African-American Hispanic/Latino
Asian Pacific Islander Other

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-5 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by circling the appropriate number preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 5-point scale is as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree

Please circle the number that corresponds to your response:

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5
The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then circle the appropriate number next to the word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers. Please circle the best answer.

	1 very slightly or not at all	2 a little	3 moderately	4 quite a bit	5 extremely
interested	1	2	3	4	5
irritable	1	2	3	4	5
distressed	1	2	3	4	5
excited	1	2	3	4	5
upset	1	2	3	4	5
strong	1	2	3	4	5
guilty	1	2	3	4	5
scared	1	2	3	4	5
hostile	1	2	3	4	5
enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
alert	1	2	3	4	5
proud	1	2	3	4	5
active	1	2	3	4	5
nervous	1	2	3	4	5
afraid	1	2	3	4	5
determine	1	2	3	4	5
attentive	1	2	3	4	5
jittery	1	2	3	4	5
ashamed	1	2	3	4	5

Debriefing.

Stress and frustration are very common in everyday life. They can result from tiny mishaps throughout the day, or bigger problems such as financial difficulties or family struggles. Finding an outlet for stress is often difficult for people. When one can't find a proper method of stress buffering they may hold in their emotions, which in the long run may cause emotional instability and physical harm. People have to learn to develop a coping mechanism in order to thrive; otherwise, they may experience detrimental consequences of stress.

The current research was designed to learn more about what techniques may act as a stress buffer. Several variables have already been examined as stress buffers, such as yoga (Granath, Ingvarsson, von Thiele, & Lundberg, 2006), meditation (Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998), and physical exercise (Brown & Siegel, 1988). The current research aims to examine whether dance can serve as an outlet for emotions, specifically stress or frustration. Half of you have participated in an improvisational dance class, while the other half have participated in an exercise class. We hypothesized that participating in a guided improvisational dance class (more so than an exercise class) should allow people to physically overcome some of the emotional conditions they may be dealing with, holding them back from living an emotionally stable life.

A second goal of this study was to determine whether dance is a stress buffer more so for dancers than non-dancers. Though dancers may often find physical movement as a way to express their frustrations, dance may be just as effective of a stress buffer for non-dancers. In this research, we hope to investigate how dance affects stress, and whether or not it affects dancers differently than non-dancers.

Thank you for participating. Once again, all responses are anonymous and confidential.

If you have further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator, Marina Karver [REDACTED]

Dance Perspectives Essay

Educating the Heart Through Dance

Marina Karver

Loyola Marymount University

Dancers often say that they dance because it is everything to them; however, it is often difficult to decipher what this really means. Daniel Pink (2006) states that in this new culture and era it is no longer sufficient to make decisions and reason with the intellectual left-sided brain alone, but we need to integrate with the more physical and creative right-sided brain. Pink (2006) frames an idea of high concept as, “the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to direct patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into new innovations.” He argues that this is a completely necessary component to communicating and functioning in this day and age. This concept is often approached through arts, such as dance. Dance provides an outlet for people to express themselves, while learning about their own emotions and feelings through their choice in movement expression. They in fact are educating their hearts with their movement.

In today’s culture, it is often believed that being a dancer entails having perfect posture, being able to do numerous turns, and jumping incredibly high while still landing with perfect grace. However, this idea is very separated from the emotional aspect that dance brings about. Dance does allow for people to express themselves and release any suppressed emotions. At times, dancers may get tied up in the technical aspects of the movements and steps, but they will also remind you that dance is their way of expressing who they are, what they do, and what they are feeling. With this being said, there is an intellectual aspect of dancing, which may be thought of as only using the mind, but there is also a physical aspect of dancing, which may be thought of as only using the body. This often results in people believing that there is a separation of mind and body in

dance. However, this paper attempts to prove otherwise; through dancing, one can more wholly integrate the mind and the body as one.

Throughout history, philosophers as well as scientists have long been interested in a discrepancy between how closely linked the body and the mind are with each other. This was termed the body-mind problem. Descartes philosophy to this was termed *Dualism*, which suggested that the mind and the brain are made up of different substances, even though they may interact (Ward, 2010). This philosophical belief implies that the mind was non-physical and immortal whereas the body was physical and mortal. Philosophers, then scientists and psychologists, and then educators have ever since discussed this issue. The philosopher Spinoza argued a concept of dual-aspect theory suggesting that the mind and the brain were two different levels of description of the same thing (Ward, 2010). With philosophies such as the latter, it has been generally decided that the mind and the body work together as a united form and are not separate at all. Through dance, it is evident that this is true. The mind and the body work together to form expressive movement. Louise Steinman (1995) remarks that even an infant's first instinct is to move, and this is how he or she obtains information about their environment. Through movement infants come to experience their individuality and sensual investigation of the world around them. It is through movement and dance that people find a respect and curiosity about the natural world.

Not only is it through movement that humans are first able to explore the environment, but as Margaret H'Doubler (1966) who was a dance education activist and created the first dance major, describes, it is also through movement that a person can express an original body rhythm, which can be considered an extension of emotional and

intellectual rhythmic form. H'Doubler (1966) also addresses a concept similar to the idea Pink (2006) would later term high concept, stating that in this time in history, no person can be sufficient with intellect alone. People must have a way that their emotional life can find some form of integration between body and mind. Dance provides opportunities to release from the binding of just being intellectual, and instead finds a connection between intellect and emotions, which in turn requires creativity. Dance allows one to exasperate the mind from any unnecessary feelings holding it back from a more satisfactory lifestyle by finding an incorporation of the mind and the body, which work together to create movement. It is through the pleasure of freedom of movement that dance can help to express the heart and emotions. Dance allows a person to develop understanding not only about oneself, but also about humanity, culture, art and life. H'Doubler (1966) states that dance is an ideal way to communicate the yearnings and satisfactions of the mind. Because in dance our body is the instrument, people are easily able to express themselves fully through movement. Every dance or dancing experience is born out of personality and brings about enrichment and integration of knowledge, both intellectual and emotional.

A person's interactions with the world are complemented by our feelings. Feelings are a means of clarification of experiences and help to give meaning to everything that occurs in a healthy person's life. Alma Hawkins (1991), a pioneering modern dance educator, states that people must know how to get in touch with their self and the nurturing of their intuitive-imaginative response. Dance often helps to evoke a deep inner-sense that stimulates one's imagination. Through movement, one can separate oneself from the external world and induce a state of relaxation and self-reflection.

Hawkins (1991) describes that the discovery and use of feelings requires a person to fully become present in the current moment, be receptive to what is going on around them, and absorb and learn from it. Expressive movement through dance allows a person to become aware and present in their current feelings or emotional state.

Body, mind, and spirit are all intertwined and function as a whole to enrich knowledge. Emotions are fundamental to thoughts and help to identify our feelings. Without this connection, people might just always respond in a narrow-minded and logical way. Carla Hannaford (1995), a neurologist and educator, explains that many research studies have been done on people who have had damage to the frontal lobe of the brain and how it has affected their emotion and thought processes. When a patient has suffered from damage in this particular area, they are not impaired in memory or intellect processes, but they do lose the ability to make reasonable decisions, and they are left with drastically reduced emotional reactivity. Patients begin to make choices that are imprudent or foolish. They also no longer react in an emotional way to events that would cause them to act a certain way. For example, patients with damage to the frontal lobe often seem irritated and angry. They begin to act in a more distant manner towards family and friends, not letting anyone in and rarely sharing their thoughts or emotions. These studies have suggested how large a role emotions play in our lives, specifically when it comes to our thought process with making decisions.

Emotions allow people to express their enthusiasm in life through their personal choices of movement execution styles. Through dance, those who are open to the opportunity are physically allowed to express their feelings and emotions. Although it is not a verbal expression of what one might be feeling or dealing with, it still accesses a

sensation of expression for emotions and ideas. Author Jamake Highwater (1978) describes that a dance utilizes the idea that every emotional state tends to express itself through movement and can accurately reflect what the dancer is feeling. Any feeling can be expressed through movement and reflects the specific quality and character of that specific emotional state.

Dance allows someone to express their feeling through way they execute their movement. Laban Movement Analysis is a theory based on four main categories: *body*, describing which body parts are moving; *effort*, the dynamics of the movement execution; *shape*, the way the body changes positions during movement; and lastly *space*, or motion in connection with the environment. With the combination and execution choices for each of these categories, one can more specifically express themselves physically.

Although these four aspects of dance allow for full body expression, dance is not usually offered for every person. It is more widely accessible for children and teens, and more acceptable for girls rather than boys. A disconnect has formed between our culture and what dance can actually offer a person. Dance does not always have to be about mastering turns, jumps, or skills; dance does not always refer to entertaining an audience while moving around a stage. It can simply be about moving the body in different forms of body, effort, space, and shape to express feeling or emotions of the heart. Nonetheless, people still struggle to understand how important it is to express their feelings, and not box them up.

When people begin to ignore and suppress their emotions, they often lose their link to conscious awareness and fall into a state of denial. In current use, suppression had

come to be understood as an intentional and conscious removal of a thought or feeling from our conscious awareness (Zanna, 1992). People often suffer to suppress unwanted emotions or thoughts. This might make a person feel as if they are free of the thought, but in fact they are stuck between a sense of freedom and a sense of limitation. The feeling of being limited is usually due to social constraints, which in turn causes a sense of vulnerability. Social pressures often are what compel individual to suppress their thoughts, feelings, or ideas, for social purposes. This then causes emotional conflict and a person may be motivated to seek detachment from his or her own thoughts. People then in turn seek to avoid thoughts because the thoughts must be stopped to avoid the expression of socially unacceptable inner working to others. Therefore, it is important to express any feeling, emotions, or thoughts and not suppress them, which can only result in inner conflict. The sense of freedom that is desired is not accessed by intentionally forgetting difficult thoughts, but rather by expressing the thoughts and the frustrations they may cause through a physical form of creativity and expressiveness, like dance.

Hannaford (1995) describes that when emotions are fully expressed and a person experiences this sensation of freedom, he or she is more able to access everything life has to offer them. For this to happen, it is important that people understand the importance of aesthetic education, which is basically the education of feeling. Dance educator Jacqueline Smith-Autard (1994) suggests that through the aesthetic qualities of dance and movement, people receive an experience of the feelings embodied. Through the understanding of the pace of movement, its effort level, and spatial design, it is often obvious what the expressive power of the movements are, which leads insight to the human feelings that are occurring in the dance. The education of feeling is an intangible

aspect of the education of dance. Feelings often show us the limitations to our verbal language, and movement can possibly better describe feeling through a physical form.

Although dance is not a requirement in schools, there is an advantage of it being added to the educational system. Through dance, the brain and the body of children can have the chance to integrate, while emotions are flowing and any tensions are being released through the physicality. Creative dance being a common course in schools would make it safer for kids to explore this type of movement and it gives them the opportunity to have fun. Having dance in even just K-6 schools, may allow the children to know how good it feels to dance, and allows them to explore physical enjoyment in patterns through dance. Author of *First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children*, Mary Joyce (1993) describes three goals of creative dancing that help to achieve an expression of emotions. First, through dance one can explore and experiment with different body movements. Second, people learn to understand and control their body and emotions. Third, they use elements of dance for artistic expression. With these three steps, people learn to make connections between the inner self and the expression of the self through movement. Joyce (1993) also describes that to reach this goal, each lesson much present a specific element, give the children and opportunity for experimentation, and require the children to use the element in a simple form. Therefore, understanding and use of the particular element becomes to goal of the day, allowing the children to become fully immersed in the movements.

Often dance allows for a person to become more whole again. This idea of a whole being greater than the sum of its parts comes from Gestalt psychology. Gestalt psychologists often find that dance is an appropriate form of expression because it allows

people to experiment, and it engages the patient to become aware of their body in space as well as giving them physical dialogue. If dance were integrated in children's education, not only it would allow for them to be educated more wholly, but they would also be able to use their mind and body in a more whole and integrated manner.

Through movement, people are fully allowed to express themselves without the barriers of the spoken language. The communication a person achieves with their body is true to the feelings and emotions in their heart. Therefore, it is often through dance that a person learns to educate their heart. Mary Joyce (1993) quotes a child who describes why she dances, "something inside me tells me that I love it and to keep going on and on because I love it so much. I never want to stop. I want to tell the whole world about something..." This answer to the question "why do you dance" really demonstrates much of what this paper has explored: dance allows people to express themselves fully; through dancing they can tell the whole world about something.

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Course Summaries

Modern:

The content of Modern dance classes at LMU are based on the fact that students will strive to step outside their comfort zone to investigate extremes of physicality and expand their dynamic range. This is a constant requirement starting from beginning Modern, all the way through Modern 5. We began with studying new dance rhythms and styles, developing our concentration, improving mental capacity, motor coordination, dance terminology and transfer of weight. After completing four years of modern dance, students will have developed adequate musculature to support aerial, floor and inversion work as well as being able to execute qualitative modulations in movement.

Ballet:

Barre and center work during Ballet classes at LMU are based on the content of achieving proper alignment, strength, flexibility, and coordination. Proper ballet terminology is made into a more recognizable vocabulary. We learned through ballet to recognize and evaluate the importance of proper placement and alignment, as well as core stability. We learned to explore the many different methods of working the foot and understanding the importance of the foot while grounded. We developed an understanding for the mind/body connection.

Fundamentals of Dance Choreography:

We focused on improvising dance movements, to compose and perform dance studies. We used various inspirational content to create dance, such as poems, literature, or unique pieces of music. We build a positive community in which we were able to speak, write and read about dance together as well as individually. We then were able to take all of our knowledge from this class and integrate it into our other dance classes as well as our life outside the studio. Lastly, we focused on and explored six essential areas of dance: the creative process, aesthetic principles, physical and performance skills, aesthetic valuing, cultural-historic context, and lastly integration.

Laban:

In this class, we learned to engage in the physical exploration based on the Laban Movement Analysis fundamentals of Effort, Shape and Space. Not only did this help us increase our knowledge of LMA, but it also allowed us to analyze and discuss movement experienced in class. We learned to deepen and refine our sensitivity, understanding and appreciation of other by creating our own individual works of choreography based on LMA and observing those of our classmates. By the end of the semester, we were able to demonstrate conceptual, theoretical, practical and analytic understandings of Effort, Shape and Space.

Pilates:

In the Pilates lab, we were able to explore and understand our own personal training needs and how certain exercises will increase performance and prevent injury. The course encouraged us to focus on breathing, injury prevention exercises, better posture, alignment and muscle and joint functioning. We are now better able to demonstrate core

strength and stability in conjunction with mobility, as well as a clear definition of our individual limitations, strengths and weaknesses.

Principles of Movement:

We learned many materials and activities that expanded our understanding of our own specialized needs. We also learned six different techniques of conditioning: neuromuscular coordination, aerobic conditioning, strength building/muscular endurance/power, flexibility/stretching, and efficient alignment. We were also introduced to the five principles of conditioning: accommodation, reversibility, specificity, progressive overload, and compensation. The above allowed us to develop more acute muscle elasticity and joint mobility/range of motion. This allowed us to find the right tool for what our bodies need.

Anatomy and Physiology and Brain and Behavior:

In Anatomy and Physiology we learned to recognize and understand anatomical and physiological terminology as well as apply the concept of homeostasis to human physiological activity. We learned anatomical and physiological features of the skeletal, muscular, nervous, and sensory systems. In brain and behavior, we learned the functions and inner workings of the brain. We learned how the brain was connected to the body and the workings of hormones, neurotransmitters and atoms.

To Dance is Human:

We learned that everyone is a dancer, somehow, someday, because we are all human. We learned about the many different ways dance is used as a part of people's cultures across the world, and how it influences their community. We learned that each and every one of us shares a similar human characteristic of natural movement in our bodies. We learned that dance has been used for many other things that just entertainment: spiritual practices, rituals, storytelling, civil rights, psychological development, etc.

Principles of Teaching:

We learned the rules and regulations for teaching dance in schools. We learned that there is a call for us as the upcoming generation to develop more of a presence of dance in school and education. We learned different ways a class can be taught, and broken down. We learned how to write credible plans for teaching a course. We learned how to see things from a teacher's perspective in a class, rather than a student's. We learned how to teach an actual class to our peers, in hope of learning technique from each other.

Yoga:

We learned to execute proper yoga postures in a series. We learned to identify the muscles at work during a posture, and how to fully engage the entire body in a pose. We learned how to identify personal imbalances, and how to correct them. We learned how to target issues on our bodies through yoga breath and postures. We learned to speak Sanskrit names to identify postures.

Dance of Hawaii:

We learned the principles of Hawaiian Dance, including basic feet movements as well as arm movements. We learned each Hawaiian word for every movement and their English translation. We learned that the movements of Hawaiian Dance, along with the music, tell a story about the history of the islands. By the end of the course, we were also able to choreograph a dance based upon the lyrics of a song.

Styles and Forms:

We learned the different ways to alter a choreographic piece through using a series of choreographic devices. We learned how to develop a simple gesture in to actual movement to create a choreographic piece as an end result. We learned to embed ourselves in the discovery process and creative exploration that is required to create a dance. We learned multiple tactics and endless decisions that can be made in the choreographic process.

Aesthetic Statement

Throughout my entire dance career, which to this point has been near to two decades, I have struggled with my own idea of what my dance aesthetic is. It has wavered back and forth from one technique to another, through many struggles that have come my way. When I first began to train in dance, I was heading down an only ballet road. I studied primarily ballet for most of my childhood. When I hit adolescence, I felt that something was missing. There was a strict rigidity in my ballet classes, which would not let me conquer the freedom of movement I desired. I enrolled in my first modern class and felt that this was where I could truly thrive. I continued to struggle with my appreciation for ballet, and only wanted to continue with my modern studies. Nonetheless, I continued to push through my ballet training, fortifying what I knew by studying the Cecchetti technique.

This road, winding between a ballet path and a modern path, has led me to find what I believe to be my current aesthetic. I have found that a balance between ballet and modern has created my own aesthetic. Some may see this movement style and call it lyrical or contemporary, but to me it is just how I feel best moving. What is most beautiful to me when I dance is how the movement truly lets me express my emotions, my desires, and myself.

One aspect of my own personal aesthetic statement that I would like to focus on is the role of music. As I have mentioned, I like to express myself through my movement. In doing so, I prefer to dance to music that really embraces my present emotions. I don't necessarily like to dance to mainstream music with lyrics forcing a specific meaning, but I prefer instrumental music, where my dancing can create its own meaning.

Freshman year, in our intro to choreography class was the first time I ever really realized this. The assignment was to create a short piece of choreography to a piece of music we had the freedom to select. The piece I chose was by a band called "Explosions in the Sky" and the song was titled *So Long, Lonesome*. Although the title may lead one to imagine a certain meaning, I did not allow this to influence my movement. The dance I created really allowed me to express my deepest emotion at the time, which was homesickness. The movement's included a combination of fast and slow twists and turns. There were many drops to the ground, allowing me to express my need to be grounded, and close to the earth. There was a lot of reaching, expressing my need for something that was far away, my home and my family. This project will probably be the most memorable aspect of my time spent in the Dance Program at LMU because it was the first time I realized my aesthetic and what I find most beautiful about dance is being able to express exactly what I am feeling at any given moment.

The role that music plays in what I believe to be the aesthetic of dance is a supporting role, although not a minor one. I find that with the combination of the music and the movement a story can be created on its own. What speaks to me as a reference point is how these two impact one another. The music alone can say one thing, while the dancing alone can tell a completely different story. In the piece mentioned above, I found the music alone to tell a story of someone wandering, not necessarily having a place to go. After combining movement with the music, I found the piece to tell a different story. It was about someone needing something in life, longing for what he or she used to have, and eventually realizing she can find what she needs anywhere. I was longing for my dance studio back at home, my family and friends, and the familiar. After the course of

the project was completed, I realized I could find what I needed and what I was missing here at LMU and in my own dancing. In realizing this, I concluded the movement with an action of hugging myself, because I had finally realized my place in the dance world: the expression of myself and what is familiar to me.

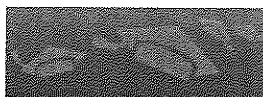
This all being said, when I watch dance, I do not enjoy the mainstream dancing which is often seen on television or in the competitive dance world. I most often enjoy the work seen in professionals like Holly Johnston or more specifically the duet "Unscripted/Riptide Into Me" by Keith Johnson that Charles and Paul preformed in during the faculty concert this past winter. This piece really showed how dancing can relay a message to the world, simply with the combination of the right music and the movement.

My other interest, specifically psychology, helps to strengthen my aesthetic statement by fortifying the need to express oneself. As seen in my research thesis, dance can often be a stress buffer. I find it so important to understand that everyone needs to find a way to express themselves, especially in times of stress, and I am so proud to say that dance is my stress buffer.

With dance as my stress buffer, I find that the role of expert technique is not always necessary. If I want to see a beautiful performance, with meaning and a deep story, I do not need to see a leg extended at a 180-degree angle and in perfect turnout. Sometimes it is more beautiful and fitting to have inward rotation and a lower leg. Nonetheless, technique is the backbone for beautiful dance, and I am very lucky to have such a strong technical background. Although it is not always necessary in a specific

piece, I do believe it is essential to understand how one can properly break away from technique to create a different aesthetic.

In conclusion, I believe a dancer should bring everything to the dance-- technique, expression, emotions, and imagination. At Loyola Marymount, I have learned that an aesthetic of a dance can be whatever someone wants it to be. It can be a ballet piece choreographed with perfect technique, or it can be a duet stating a specific struggle one may be facing. In my four years studying and soaking up as much knowledge possible about dance and psychology, I have learned that human beings need to find a way to express themselves, and through movement and whatever their own personal aesthetic may be this can be achieved.



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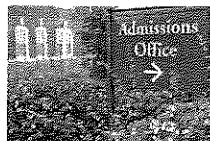


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Graduate Program

Information about the UCLA Department of Psychology Graduate Program

The UCLA Psychology Department offers graduate Ph.D. training (**there is no separate M.A. program**) with area emphases in Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical, Cognitive, Developmental, Health Psychology, Learning and Behavior, Quantitative, and Social Psychology. In all of these fields, the central objective is to train researchers dedicated to increasing the body of scientific knowledge upon which the discipline of psychology rests. The program is designed to prepare psychologists to function effectively as researchers, college and university instructors, and professional research psychologists.

Rigorous scientific training is the foundation of the UCLA Psychology Ph.D. program. As part of this training, the Department encourages student participation in the activities of a number of related departments, schools, or organized research units of the University. For instance, the Brain Research Institute, the interdisciplinary Neuroscience and Cognitive programs, the Institute for Social Science Research, and the Neuropsychiatric Institute provide extensive research facilities for interested students. The Fernald Child Study Center, moreover, bolsters the department's long-standing commitment to training in childhood learning and behavioral disorders. Other departmental resources include the Psychology Clinic. Our close working relations with local hospitals (the Veterans Administration), clinics, and institutes provide a unique opportunity for year-round training and research. UCLA's exceptionally strong library system (the University Research, Biomedical and Research libraries, among others) perfectly complements the Department's scholarly activities.

Graduates are prepared for careers in both academic and applied settings including positions at universities and colleges, research and governmental organizations, business and industry, clinics and hospitals, and as professional psychologists.

The Psychology Ph.D. program is one of 18 Ph.D. programs in the biosciences.

Outside of the Psychology Department, UCLA also offers graduate degrees in: Movement Therapy, Psychological Studies in Education, Neuroscience, Psychiatry, Social Welfare, and Sociology. Some Psychology-based certificate programs are also offered by UCLA Extension.

UCLA

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is one of the nine campuses of the

University of California. Located in west Los Angeles, five miles from the Pacific Ocean, UCLA lies in one of the most attractive areas of Southern California. The campus is bordered on the north by the Santa Monica mountains and the new Getty Museum, and at its southern gate by Westwood Village, an entertainment magnet with theaters, restaurants, and the Armand Hammer Museum. The treasures of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art are a few miles to the east, as are the communities of Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and the downtown business and entertainment districts.

Psychology, College of LAS, University of Illinois



Information for

- [Current Students](#)
- [Prospective Students](#)

Graduate Overview

Program Description

The Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a long-standing reputation for excellence. From its inception in 1904, the department has distinguished itself with outstanding faculty, research programs, and the best and brightest graduate students.

Consistently named one of the top five graduate programs in the country, the department nurtures an environment of collaborative and independent research and outstanding scholarship. The organization of our department, the variety of divisions, and the strength of our faculty allow students the opportunity to explore their interests across the discipline and alongside some of the finest minds in the country.

At the University of Illinois we provide the resources, the network, and the experience for mature young scholars to become committed professionals who make unique contributions to the field of psychology.

Whatever your professional interests and goals, you'll find an environment of excellence in which to pursue them and a community of dedicated and experienced collaborators to assist you in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois.

Learn More

The Department is organized into nine Divisions. Visit each Division's page to read more about it and see a list of affiliated faculty:

- [Behavioral Neuroscience¹](#)
- [Brain and Cognition²](#)
- [Clinical/Community³](#)

- [Cognitive](#)⁴
- [Developmental](#)⁵
- [Quantitative](#)⁶
- [Social-Personality](#)⁷
- [Industrial-Organization](#)⁸
- [Visual Cognition and Human Performance](#)⁹

There is a [Counseling Psychology](#)¹⁰ program available through the Department of Educational Psychology.

Other pages on our website provide information on [living in Urbana-Champaign](#)¹¹ and [application procedures](#)¹². You can also visit our [faculty listing page](#)¹³ and search through our faculty members' research descriptions and publications for research which reflects your interests (e.g. "memory" or "social development").

*Comments or concerns about the Graduate web pages can be sent by e-mail to gradstdy@cyrus.psych.illinois.edu.*¹⁴

This web page is only for informational purposes. Official program requirements should be obtained from the Graduate Admissions Office, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, 603 East Daniel Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

address: 603 East Daniel St., Champaign, IL 61820 • **phone:** (217) 333-0631 • **fax:** (217) 244-5876 • **email:** psych@illinois.edu

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