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Equitable and Inclusive Dance Assessment Resources

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Equitable and Inclusive Dance Assessment Resources

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters
of Education in K-12 Theatre and Dance

Hamline University

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DEDICATION

This capstone is dedicated to my mother, Jeannine Nicole Owens.

She has encouraged and supported me in many iterations of my becoming a student and teacher
in life and art.

Her ear, her wisdom, and her presence in my life throughout this pivotal capstone process
helped me to keep moving forward.

She helped me embrace and appreciate my past experiences as a young artist, student, and
teacher while inspiring me to be open to new levels in my practice as an artist, student, and
teacher of life.

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I am grateful for all those I have interacted with including family, aunties, and other educators who believed in me and encourage me.

I truly wish the positivity and support they have shared with me to come back to them and their families tenfold!

ABSTRACT

This capstone inquires, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* A dance teacher addresses the need to expand how standards and success are defined in educational dance, noting circumstances where students of dance outside the dominant culture in the United States experience fewer feelings of inclusion and success when dance standards, curriculum, and assessment do not encompass what success looks like for them given their historical and cultural identities, hindering student ability to become self-actualized and wholistically educated artists. Through a review of literature in the areas of general education pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and dance pedagogy, this capstone applies Historically Responsive Literacy, Culturally Relevant Teaching, and Universal Learning Design, to propose a resource that teachers working in diverse dance settings can utilize to facilitate equitable and inclusive assessments for success.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The purpose of this capstone is to explore curriculum and assessment strategies in dance that can help K-12 Urban dance educators create more equitable and inclusive engagement in dance programs and classrooms. This capstone connects Minnesota 2018 Dance Standards to practical assessment strategies that may be applied in the classroom. The inquiry of this dance capstone raises the question of: *How can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

About This Chapter

In this chapter, the reader gains an understanding of my personal narrative and connection to dance curriculum and pedagogy. I highlight the rationale for referencing the K-12 Minnesota Dance Standards (revised 2018) to inform dance curriculum assessments for K-5 students as a tool for dance educators within the Minneapolis Public School District and beyond. Additionally, I highlight how community systems and politics affect the landscape of dance in Minneapolis Public Schools. I elaborate on how my own dance, healing arts, and performance background and training impact what I value about dance education, as well as share my own personal story working as a dance educator in Minneapolis Public Schools. This chapter ends by highlighting the context that I find myself teaching in now, as well as the context my identity holds as a teacher and how it relates to the importance of assessing student success and equitable and inclusive student engagement in the dance classroom.

Rationale

How can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success? This is the question that arises for me as a dance educator in Minneapolis Public Schools since I started in the 2017-2018 school year. This was also the year that the Minneapolis Public School district, in collaboration with Perpich Arts faculty, published the Minnesota K-12 Theatre and Dance standards. Many professional developments over the years have referenced or introduced the standards, and I have them posted in my classroom and connect them to my lesson plans. However, assessing students on standards-based criteria can be challenging from a logistical, equitable, and inclusive perspective. Additionally, since dance is such a specialized content area, it does not have a standardized curriculum that teachers can follow or read like a text or collaborate on. In contrast, other curriculums like math and literacy have assessment criteria that many teachers across many school sites may be using; curriculums and assessments which specifically highlight what students are learning or have successfully mastered.

Throughout my time as a dance educator, I have witnessed many climate and culture shifts within my school community. Throughout this time I have also been experiencing challenges of dance teachers in urban public school systems. For these reasons, I have been drawn toward the topic of assessments for success geared toward diverse student populations, and more specifically the student populations I have been working with. Many dance teachers in the Minneapolis Public School District voice similar challenges and experiences, as I learned while attending the 2022 dance summit in Minnesota where many dance teachers in the area shared their experiences and challenges.

During my time in the district, I have also noticed how minimally I can connect with other dance educators. Since I started teaching in Minneapolis in 2017, I can speak on three specific challenges new teachers experience when starting in the district. First, there are only a handful of professional developments per year and because they are so intermittent, it is hard to share knowledge and build connections with other content-alike teachers over time. Additionally, dance teachers are usually on a team of *content area specialist teachers* in their school that will often include a media computer teacher, physical education teacher, music teacher, band teacher, or theater teacher. This means the team of *specialist teachers* does not have others in their *specialist* area to go over curriculum or grade plans with, leaving many specialist area teachers in individual silos without shared resources. Finally, Minneapolis went through the Covid 19 epidemic, the George Floyd social uprising and the teacher strike all in the past few years, causing disruption and instability for schools, transportation, parents, students, and teachers.

Having a learning community and getting a sense of the dance educators who are teaching, what they are teaching, and how they are teaching is a rare but necessary opportunity for myself and other dance educators that can benefit our school communities. Mary Harding, professor of dance at Perpich Arts Academy, hosted a summit in February 2022 for dance educators in the Minneapolis public school and the greater twin cities region. During group dialogues, many dance educators shared how challenging it can be as a content area specialist on a team of one. Creating one's own authentic curriculum based on one's own knowledge, education, and experience, with no content area teammates, that meets the standards and also is engaging, inclusive, and culturally responsive can be an isolating experience. The result becomes new educators working in silos without opportunities for regular peer connections, dialogue, and feedback. During the Dance Summit, dance educators Kara Noble (North High School)

Jahrari Love (Bethune Elementary), LaTia Childers (Fair High School), and Megan Teynor (Wellstone Elementary) also discussed how ongoing community systems and politics have affected student life and expectations. Dance educators had a hard time articulating how they specifically connect dance standards to the dance lessons they are teaching in their K-12 classrooms, but Harding acknowledged that the wide variety of dance approaches and practices currently taught do relate to the standards in some way, shape, or form. Having a common system and language for dance educators to reference, like a unified curriculum or assessment practice, may address the burnout teachers express of constantly keeping up with systemized changes and expectations on top of regular lesson planning and frees teacher energy that would otherwise be spent on planning towards student relationships and needs.

Another challenge for dance educators that was revealed at the 2022 Summit was through a panel discussion brought together by a legendary elder of the Minneapolis dance community, Colleen Callahan. Through Callahan's tenure at Hamline University as Faculty of Dance and as a dance teacher within the community, she was aware of the siloed challenges dance educators experience and curated a panel of first-year dance teachers and young dance teachers in their first year at a new school to speak to the wider audience of dance educators about their experiences, and to weigh in on how they find this profession sustainable for the long term. Callahan asked that I be a part of this panel due to being the only student at Hamline pursuing the Theatre and Dance Masters in Education and feeling alone due to the program sunseting the year after I joined. I was deeply appreciative of Callahan's insight and what the panel discussion revealed. At one point in the panel, a first-year teacher broke down her experience as a primary school dance teacher, while speaking about the challenges she faced managing classroom behaviors and creating curriculum that meets the standards. I and others connected to this experience; I

particularly connected to her because I was experiencing similar challenges at my first school in South Minneapolis.

A theme I heard during the panel, from both the panelists and the audience of dance educators, is that dance classes have been increasingly challenging and draining for teachers due to student disengagement causing behavioral management challenges, and pressure to create relevant standards-based curricula that keep students engaged. The educators voiced that they want to be able to communicate what students are able to do in dance, assess student learning, and cover dance content that students can engage in. It is clear from the panel participants from the dance summit that more structures in place to support dance learning in a K-12 setting would be beneficial.

The challenges faced by Minneapolis Public School educators specifically are twofold. First, the above information from personal experiences of dance educators indicates that a change in dance pedagogy practices is needed to sustain the evolving needs of students. Second, the community and district at large have seen:

- “ fewer than 28,000 students in grades K-12 this year — proving the persistence of a steep enrollment decline in the city's schools, which have lost more than 7,000 students over the last five years.” (Mara Klicker, Star Tribune, 2022, para. 1)
- Two concurrent community crises:
 - 1) *The COVID-19 Pandemic*, which mandated schools in all 50 states to close in-person learning at some point in the 2019-2020 school year. The pandemic additionally closed schools on and off for the next two school years, causing unprecedented absences and a change in how students engage with school. (Balletpedia, n.d.)

- 2) *The George Floyd Uprising*, starting May 25, 2021, after George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis after being handcuffed and pinned to the ground by Derek Chauvin, a white police officer. (New York Times, 5 November 2021).
- A continuing decline in new teacher retention and staffing as a whole, with the discourse of Minnesota's number of diverse teachers being a rare issue finding bipartisan support in legislature, because only five percent of teachers of people of color while more than a third of Minnesota students are." Minneapolis Federation of Teachers President Callahan additionally said "close to 200 teachers of color left or were fired from Minneapolis over the past two years, compared to 48 teachers of color who've been laid off in the past 15 years. (Joey Peters, Sahan Journal, August 2022)
 - A teacher strike taking place over the 2021-2022 school year, disrupting learning and teaching over a period of three weeks.

Given this data, it is clear that teacher compensation, dance curriculum implementation, and multiple classroom management methodologies need to be systemically addressed by the public/urban school system in order to support new dance educators and their students and programs to thrive.

Amidst these challenges, the Comprehensive District Design (CDD) was introduced as a district-wide restructuring of boundaries which then racially integrated many schools. This meant funding was leaving many areas and being allocated to different areas.

The CDD was created to address the district's structure that led to "more segregated schools and worse outcomes for students on the city's North Side; most magnet schools and popular academic programs were clustered in south Minneapolis. District leaders intended the CDD to help curb declining enrollment, reduce race and class segregation, and set the district up

to be more financially sustainable, with an anticipated \$20 million budget shortfall for the coming school year” (Star Tribune, Ryan Faircloth, May 16, 2020). The plan was met with significant opposition from many Minneapolis families and teachers. Critics remained skeptical about the redesign, believing it would cause major upheaval across the city that would lead to further enrollment decline.

These articles establish a broader socio-political lens, and with the previous data, demonstrate that standards-based curriculum and assessment are necessary as a tool to support dance teacher and student success, especially with so many unprecedented and uncontrollable factors at play.

With the introduction of funding allocated to different areas by the 2021 CDD, more dance teaching positions became available. For several years I was the only teacher teaching K-5 dance in the Minneapolis Public School district; then in 2021 I applied for six dance and teaching positions and came to realize that there were many more positions created. Recognizing the arts, and specifically dance, as a critical need during these challenging times, more arts money allocated to Minneapolis dance educators created a unique and challenging opportunity. There were more dance educator positions than qualified dance educators to fill. This exponential increase of dance funding in the Minneapolis Public School district paired with high teacher expectations highlights another need for standardized curriculum and assessment criteria.

Utilizing the language and structure of the Minnesota Dance Standards (revised 2018) to create systematized goals and assessment criteria is applicable to my experience as a dance educator on a personal and professional level. Systemized dance goals and assessment criteria resources would benefit the urban education system I am a part of, addressing the student need for transformation of assessment and curriculum geared towards cultural responsiveness, inclusion,

and student success using a resource already available. As student demographics change, how and what is taught must change and adapt, too. Utilizing the Minnesota Dance Standards (revised 2018) to create assessment criteria highlights teacher needs as well: a refined assessment criteria and curriculum that can be read as a text and interpreted for any dance educator's practice. In this chapter, I will highlight a personal story that details why creating this equitable and inclusive groundwork for assessment in elementary dance programs is so meaningful for me, share factors of my first-year teaching experience that made the profession challenging, provide a context for my current teaching practice, and conclude with a chapter summary.

Personal Background

I am originally from Fullerton, California and my parents are originally from the Southside of Chicago. Fullerton is a suburb of Orange County, not too far from Disneyland. I was a passionate scholar, dancer, and performer from an early age, starting dance instruction in the styles of Jazz, Tap, and Ballet when I was four. I always had ambitious dreams to be a dance teacher, theatre teacher, or choir teacher as I pursued performing arts throughout my educational career.

Training

In 2016, I graduated with a degree in Dance and a minor in Music from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. I pursued dance in college after I had previously pursued theatre and choir for many years throughout my educational career. After my time in studio dance classes from ages four through nine, I pivoted to musicals around middle school and delved into the world of choral tradition from ages 14 through 21. During high school I also was very involved in theatre, contributing as an actor, stage manager, performer, and drama club president.

Dance, movement, and the performing arts have been important to me for a long time. An important experience I had that brought the idea of healing and wellness into the picture was working at The Painted Turtle Camp for two summers in college. The Painted Turtle Camp is one of many Serious Fun™ camps founded by Paul Newman and designed with children with life-threatening and chronic illnesses in mind. Going to this camp as a camper from ages 9-16 and later working there in my early twenties connected to me how dance and creative arts can be so liberating, unifying, and empowering, no matter how your body works or what your ability is.

The next time I reentered performance as a dancer was at Luther College during my undergraduate degree with Professor of Dance, Jane Hawley. Her radically somatic and body-positive approach to dance met me at the intersection of where I was in terms of how dance can be a practice of healing and liberation for the mind and body.

Soma comes from the Latin word body, and from this connection, one can define somatic as having to do with the body. I was enraptured by how a somatic approach to dance could connect me to my body when throughout my life, pain and chronic illness became something that disconnected me from my body and affected the way I created art and expressed my identity. Movement Fundamentals® was labeled by Nancy Wozny from *Dance Magazine* as a groundbreaking dance curriculum inspired by somatic and scientific movement studies and it continues to ground my approach and practice as a dance artist and educator today.

A somatic approach to dance is a way of experiencing dance from the inside (body) first, rather than the outside style-first approach. For me, it is a way of being aware of one's physical and emotional body while moving. Somatic awareness can apply to dance, yoga, sports, or simply being in one's body going about life's mundane tasks

This somatic-based lens continues to inform the way I show up as a student, yoga teacher, special education paraprofessional, and as a person moving through the world. Soon afterward, I was employed as a children's gymnastics teacher, moved to South Minneapolis, and started pursuing my Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) 200, a 200-hour certification program to be a Registered Yoga Teacher from Your Yoga Minneapolis. Your Yoga was a small and popular studio that valued what I valued in terms of connecting the mind and body in an inclusive learning community had an emphasis on vinyasa yoga style, and history as well as hands-on practice geared toward finding one's unique teaching voice and style. Around this time I also started working as a special education paraprofessional at an International Baccalaureate (IB) elementary school located in the heart of South Minneapolis, hosting a diverse student population, near the center of what I would later associate with the George Floyd riots on 38th street and Chicago avenue. My work as a special education paraprofessional included acting as a one-on-one for a nonverbal autistic student who also had high medical needs. This position expanded into working with more students in the K-2 autism class, and the next year as a special education paraprofessional in a mixed autism and emotional behavior disorder (EBD) setting. I continue to serve as a personal care assistant (PCA) for a family I connected with upon moving to Minneapolis in 2017. I specifically work with a nonverbal autistic member of the family with high medical needs and a developmental delay. Throughout the years, I have developed close ties to the family and have appreciated how this work keeps me in the world of special education.

Dream Job

My experience, passion, and proximity led to me being offered the position of dance and theatre specialist at the elementary school where I was a paraprofessional, soon after graduation from Luther College.

This was such a cumulating moment for me at the time, a year or two out of college, my perfect dream job falling on my lap. I remember when the principal offered me the job. It was a perfect fall day, and the teachers and special education paraprofessionals were bringing the students from the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program in from recess. The principal at the time pulled me aside and asked what I would think about taking the position since the current theatre and dance teacher was moving to another school. It was Friday, October 13, 2017, and at this moment so many thoughts and just a pure rush of excitement and fulfillment flowed through me. I was so ecstatic to pursue my cumulative work in a real and impactful way, in a more diverse setting than I myself was raised in growing up in Orange County. In a few weeks, I would be transitioning to my own classroom and teaching my own classes. I continued throughout my day feeling elated and excited to connect with my mom about it.

This day took a life-changing turn when I was working with an EBD student who was known to have an unsafe body and run away from teachers and the school. As I was bringing him to join his reading group, he pulled me down and kicked my left knee, dislocating my kneecap. I remember telling my coworker to clear the area and call an ambulance. My patella was dislocated to the side of my bent leg, and I was trying to put it back into place while trying not to pass out or curse. Maybe I did curse or scream or cry. I wished I was anywhere else; I wished my pain could leave my body. I somehow held my dislocated knee while I straightened my leg so I could relocate my patella. By that time, the ambulance arrived and I was put on a stretcher. The principal told the paramedics to get me through the hallway and out of the building before the bell rang and the students flooded the hallway. I wondered if I could still take my dream job as I rode away.

I did my job on crutches starting the next day, and in conjunction started physical therapy while preparing for my new position. I did start the position, but after some unsuccessful physical therapy, I needed to have surgery that was scheduled six months later on Friday, April 13, 2018. At the time there were no other theatre or dance specialists at the elementary level in the district, and I was isolated in my building and as a *specialist teacher*. I was young, black in a building with predominantly white licensed teaching staff, and injured. Less experienced, but with a passion for learning and education, for kids and community, I worked my way from a Community Expert License to a Tier Two license to a Tier Three license while Minnesota's entire licensure system was being revamped, and became fully licensed to teach K-12 Dance and Theatre in the state of Minnesota.

Throughout those first few years of my educational journey, I was presented with excess papers every year; meaning each year the principal was finding a reason to eliminate my position from the school budget, yet somehow each year I jumped the hurdles I needed to in order to have my contract renewed. I navigating a system with a history of systemic racial disparities, and myself being presented with systemic racial challenges, microaggressions, and hurdles navigating workers' compensation and disability challenges while endeavoring the typical learning lessons of first-year teachers. I also witnessed the George Floyd movement unfold in front of my eyes because the school I worked at was on the same street. Our community and nation as a whole went through Covid and I taught my performing arts classes virtually on and off throughout the pandemic. I managed to hang onto my position until the Minneapolis District Comprehensive Design of 2021 excessed the 20 least senior teachers at my school. Many teachers throughout the district were excessed; the school budget eliminated their positions due

to budget cuts and changes. At my new school, about a fourth of the original teaching staff from the previous year was excessed, and about a fourth of the incoming teaching staff was new.

Context

Between 2017 and 2022, I went from being the only K-5 theatre and dance teacher in the district while interviewing for six different primary-aged theatre and dance positions that were posted for the 2021-2022 school year. On one day, I was offered three positions and asked to make a decision that day, so when I declined they could offer the position to the next candidate. I decided to accept the dance educator position at Marcy Arts Magnet elementary school. In August 2021 I joined a theatre teacher, music teacher, band teacher, art teacher, and arts magnet coordinator and together we served as a specialist team. We worked alongside many licensed teachers teaching kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as admin and paraprofessionals bringing their own backgrounds and experiences to this unique urban arts magnet school.

As I highlighted previously, on February 12, the Dance Educators Summit 2022 hosted by Mary Harding at Perpich Arts in St. Paul, MN brought together dance educators around Minneapolis and the greater Twin Cities to gather and share in movement and discussion surrounding their experiences as K-12 urban educators. I was part of a panel of five other new dance educators, about half of the dance educators being in a primary setting like me. We all shared and felt similar stories of escalating classroom behaviors, poorly resourced work environments, and isolation among the specialist teachers.

With many teachers throughout the district in dance, the arts, and beyond feeling the effects of the challenges and changes as well, the general view among educators and the educators' union became that the students deserve better. During Valentine's week, as an act of love for the students, 95% of teachers in the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, voted to

authorize a teacher strike. They voted yes for a living wage for educational support staff, recruitment and retention of educators of color, and mental health supports for students.

After a ten-day cooling-off period in which this district had a choice to meet the demands of the union but did not, a strike was called. The current conditions in Minneapolis Public Schools, in conjunction with the COVID epidemic and the George Floyd uprising, signaled an unavoidable need for change and adaptation in our teaching and practices. These conditions contributed to disengaged learners, in the K-5 Performing Arts setting and beyond.

As I previously stated, Minneapolis dance educators are presented with a unique and challenging opportunity with more dance teaching positions open than ever before due to the influx of arts money provided by the controversial District Comprehensive Design. However, the unique socio-historical context as well as a lack of availability and accessibility of dance teacher preparation programs puts Minneapolis dance educators in a space for expansion, as the district at that time had more dance educator positions than qualified educators to fill them, creating a district-wide systemic issue.

Figure 1



My work at Marcy Arts has been solely a dance position, which I have been grateful and excited about. I appreciate the content area focus and the fact that I have a specialist team working together for the greater vision of an arts magnet school. Marcy Arts is a collaborative learning community to grow in with a little funding for my program due to the new arts magnet status. Marcy hosts a theatre with a stage and tech booth, and I have a newly renovated dance classroom space with sprung wood floors, two window walls, and mirrors. *(Figure 1)*

After teaching dance at Marcy for hundreds of students from the 2021-2022 school year and beginning the 2022-2023 school year with joy commitment and delight, I decided to leave my position in February 2023. What started out as a dream job fulfillment became an awareness of what skills and experiences I have that have cumulated me to this position, and what skills and experiences I have that crave a different environment to be grown and shared. With the difficult choice of trying to sustain myself alone in a crumbling and challenging work environment, or leave that environment and be supported by my family, I chose to put my career as a dance teacher on pause to focus on my health and family.

I reflect upon how my journey in dance and dance education has weaved in and out of accessibility and inaccessibility on a physical level. As I had previously stated, I live with autoimmune disorders that have both challenged me in dancing the way I wanted, yet pushed me forward on the path of learning and healing through movement and dance in ways I did not know were possible. When I declared a dance major during my undergraduate degree at Luther College, I had previously been focused on Music Education and Theatre. This pivotal return to my original performing arts form of dance initiated a rediscovery and ownership of my body and its stories. I realized the healing power of dance and the body, and how my embodied experiences as an educator and artist are impacted by the social and political context in which I

move through the world. This is what I hope and vision for the students I work with— I want dance and movement to help them become more embodied and more empowered. I want them to relate dance to their everyday lives. I want them to feel like dancers no matter where they come from or where they want to go.

It is important to name race as a factor that has been present in my work and life. My Blackness is one factor that I know affected how people perceive me in my school community and how I perceive myself, my identity, and my sense of belonging. It is really important for me to create work that has longevity so I can contribute to black dance literature, black dance curriculum, and dance education from my black lens. I did not have the opportunity to learn with a Black teacher until college through Professor Guy Nave who taught religion classes at Luther College, who first introduced me to the idea that God could look like anybody, including a black woman. My first black women teachers entered my educational journey in the latter half of my college career when I studied abroad in Jamaica and was co-taught by a black American woman Dr. Sheila Radford Hill, and a Jamaican born woman Wintlett Taylor-Browne.

Experiencing teachers who looked like me had a tremendous impact on my learning and today I want to model the change that I want to see in this world. Embodying the change I currently want to see in the world looks like researching what assessments for success can look like in an inclusive and equitable dance classroom; this is one way I can contribute to the current conversations and discourses in dance education curriculum and pedagogy.

One additional note in this Capstone is that race is lowercase while ethnicity is uppercase, meaning when I am identifying my own race or the race of others, readers will see *black* rather than *Black*, for example. This shows my intention to imply race is an everyday factor and

experience that we will always take into account in the discourse on the American education experience, rather than separating it as the subject and inquiry of this capstone.

My project interweaves the power of my own cultural lens with current dance education assessment and curriculum practice. My identity as a black educator informs my learning in dance teaching and practice. In this capstone, it is my intent to highlight how a dance educator might visibilize their identity in their own teaching and practice.

Conclusion

The intention for my Capstone experience is to help other dance educators in my position, and many others in different dance teaching positions, by creating a standards-based assessment resource designed for K-12 dance teachers specifically to make it easier to connect the standards the dance educators curriculum and identity, to equitable and inclusive assessment practices. The 2018 Minnesota Dance Standards highlight a means to create a system of assessment that leads to more equitable and inclusive classrooms, and they will provide the basis for the assessment framework. Through my project, I define and frame what success can look like in a K-12 urban arts context. The literature review in the next chapter highlights texts that provide context, perspectives, and frameworks in dance education pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and general education pedagogy with the intention to orient audiences to the multiple frameworks that will inform the capstone project. In this capstone, I ask the question: *How can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Chapter Three culminates in a MN K-5 dance curriculum guide with corresponding assessment components informed by the MN K-12 Theatre and Dance standards. Culturally

relevant learning frameworks, educational pedagogies sources, and dance pedagogy research discussed in the next chapter inform this curriculum and assessment resource, with the intention to share it amongst dance educators at a future MN Dance Education Summit, at a future National Dance Education Organization conference, or at an arts educator professional development.

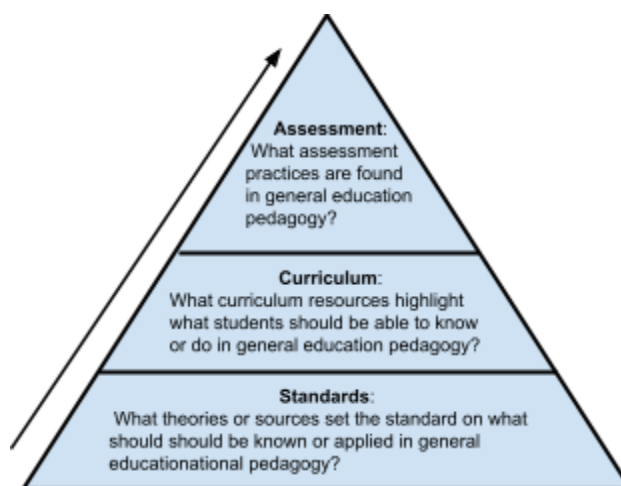
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter Two provides the reader with a context of what current literature says about *educational pedagogy*, *culturally responsive pedagogy*, and *dance pedagogy*. The literature review explores sources that help the reader gain an understanding of what *standards*, *curriculum*, and *assessment* can look like in multiple educational settings and how these factors apply to the question of *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Chapter Two is organized into three sections that explore three pedagogical lenses that support context and understanding in building standards based assessment: *educational pedagogy*, *culturally responsive pedagogy*, and *dance pedagogy*. Each section unpacks three parts of pedagogy— *standards curriculum*, and *assessment*, with each part building upon the next.



Educational Pedagogy
Figure 2

An example of how the *educational pedagogy* section in this capstone was organized is found in Figure 2. Each section highlights specific methodological approaches or frameworks found in the resources presented. Resources featured in this literature review were evaluated on their strengths and weaknesses; furthermore, information found was summarized, synthesized, and connected back to the capstone question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Educational Pedagogy

The first part of the literature review was dedicated to exploring sources that lay educational frameworks that inform teachers of subjects outside of dance, particularly core content subjects such as English language arts. This also included other areas unrelated to fine arts, such as math and literacy, as well as additional specialist areas like physical education and music. By comparing and contrasting educational pedagogies and highlighting the standards, curricula, and assessment strategies derived from them, practical systems and models were highlighted which can further clarify the significance of the question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Standards in Educational Pedagogy

One resource that exemplified how standard resources can be systemized is the Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12 (Department of Education, 2010). Published in 2010, the common core state standards for English language arts and literacy are the accumulation of an extended effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K-12 standards, setting the framework to ensure that all students are college

and career, ready and literacy no later than the end of high school. The standards derive from international models and include research and input from new resources, schools, professional organizations, educators, and educational stakeholders. English language arts standards arose from the need to define college and career readiness and what it means to be a literate person in the 21st century.

With this intent of college and career readiness set in place, one may apply this lens to the K-12 Theatre and Dance Standards 2018. What do educators want students to be able to do by the time they progress through the standards? To be an artist, to feel like an artist, to be creative? Providing answers to these questions in conjunction with the standards themselves seems to make an impact on the value and understanding of educational standards.

To specify further the organizational structure of this resource, one may look to the benchmarks. The reading benchmarks for K-5 literature in the common core standards focus is to help ensure students gain exposure to a wide range of texts and tasks. This resource emphasized that progress in each area is dependent on understanding and mastery across all English language domains (Department of Education, 2010).

Organized into three main sections divided based on grade level, this capstone highlights the standards for English language arts for grades k-5. Each section was divided into four strands: 1) *reading*, 2) *writing*, 3) *speaking, viewing, listening, and media literacy*, and 4) *language*. Each strand featured learning progressions anchored in college and career readiness standards.

The standards serve as a teacher resource for focused instruction paced for each year, helping to ensure students are getting an adequate understanding of a range of skills and applications. They also define what students are expected to do each based on grade level

standards, and are scaffolded in a way that encourages students to retain skills while allowing teachers to make adjustments related to learner needs based on their own understanding of their students.

This resource was included in this capstone not only because it was an accessible and comparable research based framework, but also because it highlighted how an accessible research based framework adds more cohesiveness and credibility to the field, helping educators and other educational stakeholders value the content area (Department of Education, 2010).

An additional resource that set the standard on what educators should be able to know or do when it comes to teaching literacy from a culturally responsive perspective is *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*, 2020, by Gholdy Muhammad. *Cultivating Genius* was featured in the standards section of this capstone to emphasize the value of grounding standards from a lens and framework of equity, in addition to defining what students should be able to do as the previous source has. The introduction to this book started by highlighting the value of literacy for black people in America.

In contrast to the *Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12*, this source highlighted that student achievement has been stagnant over the past 25 years with standards overemphasizing skills and drills. *Cultivating Genius* asks readers to inquire about: what is missing from the way we structure education today, what is absent from the curricular standards and frameworks that may cause student achievement and success outside of these standards to be overlooked, what can educators learn from history and apply to curriculum and instruction today, and why many school frameworks being used and created are not explicitly designed for students of color.

In the introduction, the author argued for a reframed set of learning standards in literacy,

education, and history, that restores excellence in education. The author highlighted that low expectations have made it challenging for educators to cultivate the genius that lies within each student's capacity. The author additionally highlighted their lived experience as a teacher, educator, and school board members as their purpose behind improving how literacy education. Another piece that articulated her purpose in research has been understanding how literacy was conceptualized and practiced in historically black populations, comparing it to how educators engage youth in literacy today (*Cultivating Genius*).

Muhammad (2020) shared the ways in which literacy was defined historically and outlined a four-layered equity framework reimagining the standards set for teaching and learning: *identity development*, *skill development*, *intellectual development*, and *criticality*. The author additionally emphasized how literacy in society has evolved. This draws similarities to how an arts educator may emphasize what role arts have played in society. The author in particular realized criticality as necessary for students to make sense of injustice, and ultimately develop the agency to transform and build a better world.

Muhammad's (2020) book helped educators redesign their learning goals, lesson plans, and discern texts they use to teach. The ideas in this resource incorporated multiple theoretical orientations for teaching and learning, including cognitive, social, cultural, critical, and sociohistorical theories. Moreover, this resource emphasized that educators need to move towards cultivating the genius that already lies within students and teachers. Muhammad (2020) stated that to teach geniuses, teachers must cultivate their own genius that lies within them; teachers who do not recognize their own genius need to be striving each day for it.

The authors's hope was that developers and writers behind the state standards, district, curriculum, and state exams incorporate the four components of the Historically Responsive

Literacy framework as a means to “rethink and expand the standards and questions we ask of students” (*Cultivating Genius*, 2020, p. 13).

Cultivating Genius was divided into three parts: part one titled *Drawing from History to Reimagine Literacy Education*, exploring how 19th century black literary society set a model for elevating today’s literacy and learning (Muhammad, 2020). It also highlighted a definition of historically responsive literacy, grounding research in Gloria Ladson Billings’ research in culturally responsive teaching. Part two outlined teaching and learning with the four layered historically responsive framework, featuring four chapters: *towards the pursuit of identity*, *towards the pursuit of skills*, *towards the pursuit of intellect*, and *towards the pursuit of criticality*. Part three provided practices for implementing historically responsive texts and lesson plans. It outlined a historical account of the importance of books and literature and gave readers a lesson plan template and additional sample lessons inclusive of the four layered Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) framework.

The afterword was written by Maisha T. Winn, a professor in the School of Education at the University of California Davis. She reminded educators that “our own histories, as well as those belonging to students, school, committees, and surrounding neighborhoods, must be given consideration if stakeholders and schools are to engage in productive relationships”(Muhammad, 2020, p.170). Winn continued to state that Muhammad’s framework provides purpose to the work to those who consider themselves allies of children as well as a roadmap to do the work.

This powerful and timely book broadend educator understandings on supporting students with diverse social and historical identities. It framed student success from a perspective of abundance rather than deficit and invited educators to apply the framework to their curriculum and lesson plans. While it serves as a contemporary resource for teachers in engaging their own

curriculum through an equity based framework to see the intelligence in every student, the need to equip educators with additional tangible resources based on these frameworks still remains.

When it comes to this specific example of educational pedagogy, *Cultivating Genius* set a mark for how educators can apply Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) to their curriculum, which serves as a main actionable takeaway for audiences. *The Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12* (Department of Education, 2010) set another standard more familiar to educators teaching in a public school setting; while it may be a format more familiar to K-12 educators, it did not include the culturally relevant pedagogical frameworks featured in *Cultivating Genius*. The *Minnesota Academic Standards for Language Arts* did acknowledge that there are things not covered, stating that “a great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers,” with the goal of the standards to “articulate the fundamentals,” not to set out an exhaustive restrictive list that limits what can be taught (2010, p.8).

A key takeaway audiences can note from the *MN Standards for English Language Arts K-12* is the model it set in organizing a scope and sequence for what students should be able to do and what teachers should be teaching (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010). Its sections were organized into anchors by grade level, divided into content based learning strands, and featured learning progressions anchored in college and career readiness standards. Each anchor standard had numeric benchmarks that identify the grade, substrand, and anchor standard, further organizing for teachers the learning progressions for each grade. Another key takeaway from this text was its appendices, which featured supplementary material on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language, as well as a glossary of key terms and textual examples with a range of learning appropriateness for all grade levels. Elements of this resource’s structure were applied in the capstone project further explored in Chapter Three.

Cultivating Genius' Historically Responsive Literacy framework was additionally applied to the capstone project further articulated in Chapter Three. The intention of pairing these sources together in this capstone was to emphasize the importance for those creating curriculum and standards to take into account multiple frameworks that are inclusive and equitable for every student.

Curriculum in Educational Pedagogy

While standards may inform educators on what they should be teaching toward and what students should be able to know or do, they do not necessarily outline to teachers what lessons to teach and when to teach them. This is why scaffolding knowledge of educational standards prior to exploring educational curriculum was foundational in this capstone. *Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction: How to Bring Content and Process Together*, by H. Lynn Erickson and Lois A. Lanning, 2014 was explored next in this capstone because of the way it captured how standards can be put into practice to inform instruction and curriculum.

This book started by describing and inquiring: *how can you tell a thinking child?* It went on to describe teachers as wanting to see signals of their students in learning mind, but then poses the reader to question what our notion of an enlightened mind is. This text highlighted that to look at traditional fact driven curricula and corresponding assessments, one might think an enlightened mind is measured by a breath of factual knowledge (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

The author went on to say that the notion of an enlightened mind is shifting, and therein lies the purpose of the book: to present the case for needed transformations in the traditional model of curriculum and instruction. It advocated for concept based curriculum and instruction, described as an inquiry driven, idea-centered approach to learning that goes beyond memorization of facts and skills and into students' deeper conceptual understanding that can be

applied through time across cultures and across situations, supporting student ability to see patterns and connections between similar ideas, events or issues (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

The book was organized into 10 chapters with the intent to give educators and curriculum developers an additional curriculum lens, and by effect broaden what success and learning can look like for students. Each chapter introduced concepts with visual models, gave examples of the concepts practiced in the classroom, gave examples of multiple content areas, offered discussion questions toward the end for educators, and then summarized the chapters' learnings (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

One significant concept of this book was defined in chapter two, where two dimensional versus three dimensional curriculum models were broken down. The authors pointed out a significant difference between the traditional model of curriculum design, based on verb objectives, (list, analyze, identify,) and the concept based models of curriculum design (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

The two dimensional model that informs traditional curriculum design focused on facts and skills and generally *assumes* deeper conceptual understanding. In the three-dimensional model, topics, facts, and skills were made important components, but the third dimension of concepts, principles, and generalizations *ensures* that conceptual thinking is prominent in the design of curriculum and instruction. The author clarified that, in arguing for this three dimensional education model, it is not to say that a two dimensional model contains no conceptual focus. But rather, conceptual understandings are not clearly distinguished from factual skills and expectations. The writers advocated that teaching for deeper conceptual understanding differs dramatically from teaching to memorize factual knowledge, and that curriculum must address these two levels, especially to support teachers and their planning.

They also advocated that how we organize curriculum and content impacts students' understanding of the concept (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

Chapter 3 went on to break down the *structure of knowledge*, highlighting a *theory*, or a set of conceptual ideas used to explain a phenomenon or practice. The theory of knowledge is needed in education because “we should no longer assume that students are developing conceptual understanding. We must teach for, and draw out the conceptual understandings” (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p.35). The author stated that macro concepts can be too broad to serve as organizers for disciplinary content, so when designing disciplinary curriculum frameworks, educators can help students by grouping topics together by concept.

Concepts can be macro to micro, with macro concepts being broad and transferable across many different subject areas. For this reason, they make great conceptual lenses for focusing on major topics of study. Macro concepts can also be utilized to integrate interdisciplinary thinking. Micro concepts are tied to different disciplines and are more specific and easily identifiable. These authors suggested that macro ideas will address breadth, which is great transferability across situations, but will not promote or provide depth of understanding (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

The next chapter outlined the *structure of process*, the complement of the *structure of knowledge*. The *structure of process* shows the relationship of processes, strategies, and skills to concepts and principles in process various disciplines. The United States common core standards, and other standards that model after them, turned a spotlight on the *structure of process*, which made this resource especially pertinent to this capstone's focus on discovering how standards may inform curriculum (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

The authors' take this concept a step further, taking processes from the national common

core standards and then organizing them based on *concepts* and *generalizations*. *Generalizations* are present to summarize the important understanding students will realize by the end of the unit of study. A typical curriculum unit will have 5 to 8 *generalizations*, depending on the grade level and length of the unit. In a process based discipline unit like art, music, and world language, most generalizations will represent important understandings about processes, while there may be some addressing the content understandings (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

Using the *structure of process* to guide curriculum and instruction is important, because for students, without an understanding of *why* the strategies that they are using are important, they will not know *how* to apply their learning. The result leads to situational learning, skill-based learning, and students experiencing more difficulty to remember and transfer their learning. The structure of process highlighted that ideas are as essential to understanding processes, as they are to understand knowledge: “if instruction and assessment become overly skewed to knowledge versus process or the inverse, understanding, often remains at surface level” (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p.)

The writers highlighted throughout this text purposefully designing instructions, so that knowledge and process are periodically brought together, is important to the conceptual understandings that will develop learners who are prepared for the complexities of the 21st century (Erickson & Lanning, 2014). It is pertinent to highlight that the authors use the phrase *complexities of the 21st century* throughout the book but do not necessarily define it as societal factors, but rather the truth that society is always changing. As a reader one wonders if they meant issues in race or class, and just chose not to acknowledge it these issues in favor of using the term complexities of the 21st century.

There are several chapters in *Concept Based Learning* that gave audiences guidance and

examples of concept-based pedagogy, based on their relationship to the field of education, whether that is students, teachers, or curriculum writers (Erickson & Lanning, 2014). This capstone continues to explore what the authors have to say about concept based curriculum, specifically geared towards teachers.

This concept based curriculum section grounded in teacher application started by defining concept based curriculum as a three dimensional curriculum-design model that frames the factual and skill content of subject areas with disciplinary *concepts* and *generalizations*, contrasting with the traditional two dimensional model of topic and skill-based curriculum design. It highlighted the international baccalaureate organization as an example and model of the framework (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

It featured critical aspects of concept-based pedagogy important to teaching and learning:

- 1) *Synergistic thinking*, meaning that when the factual level of thinking interacts with the conceptual level of thinking the factors a deeper understanding, and the ability to transfer ideas to other times places or situations.
- 2) *The conceptual lens*: a conceptual lens is generally a broader concept, such as conflict or interdependence, that provides a focus to a classroom unit of study.
- 3) *Inductive versus deductive reasoning*: The authors highlighted inductive teaching as drawing understanding from students, contrasting with deductive teaching, which tells students the conceptual understanding upfront and then engages them in learning experiences to reinforce the meaning of the idea. The authors stated that concept based instruction relies more on inductive teaching to encourage students to discover and build meaning for themselves. (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p. 96)

To summarize, this chapter informed teachers of what they need to understand, and why they need to understand content based curriculum and instruction. The authors highlighted the road ahead and brought forth the important fact that instruction does not end with factual knowledge but accumulates in deeper conceptual understandings. It was the belief of the authors that concept based curriculum and instruction are there to help educate the whole child. They stated the path forward includes the world changing, and that in the 21st century teachers cannot do business as usual. The authors also stated their belief of education being at an exciting crossroad with the United States common core standards, similarly to how this capstone highlighted how the Minnesota K-12 Theatre and Dance standards puts dance educators in a unique and exciting situation. The authors stated that curricula needs to reflect the changes in society and the environment (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

While this is contrasting to what *Cultivating Genius* articulated about curriculum needing to reflect students and their lives and lived experiences, the authors ultimately made a valid point in saying that concept based curriculum is important so that students can have deeper understanding given the age of information where we can Google factual information in a second— bypassing deep learning and understanding that could be happening if we were not in the age of information. A main idea readers can take away from *Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction: How to Bring Content and Process Together* is how *concepts* and *generalizations* work in conjunction with each other and can be applied to dance curriculum creation (Erickson & Lanning, 2014). *Concepts* group topics together intentionally helping students develop deeper banks of knowledge; by connecting these *concepts* educators can help students distinguish content area concept understandings from factual skills and expectations. *Generalizations* in this text are present to summarize the important understanding students will realize by the end of the

unit of study and are especially prevalent and expected in the world of public education.

The ideas from this resource intersect into the world of dance curriculum development and assessment as readers will discover in Chapter Three, when the project framework is outlined. This resource highlights an effective curriculum model that helps readers better understand this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Assessment in Educational Pedagogy

After highlighting to readers a context of how general education pedagogy interacts with standards and curriculum, this capstone now emphasizes general education assessment strategies and frameworks that support this capstone's inquiry into *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

One applicable resource this capstone covers is *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students: Strategies for Teaching and Assessment*, by Elizabeth A. Grassi and Heidi Bulmahn Barker, 2010. This text is for teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. It serves as a resource for teachers who need to build knowledge of the behaviors of students who are acquiring late English as a second language, which may look similar to the behaviors of students who are learning, disabled, or has speech or language impairments, but the core issues that determine these behaviors are different.

This text additionally highlighted laws that impact programs for culturally and linguistically diverse students, featuring the civil rights act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving

federal financial assistance. This meant these institutions have legal obligations that teachers fulfill the needs of all of their English language, learners and culturally diverse students. This text also highlighted the truth that there are many bilingual programs that are designed to develop English only skills and assimilation, including a timeline with central principles included in special education law, using much of the language and terminology used throughout the field of public education (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

A key note in this chapter that affects how assessments were framed and viewed is how English language learning and culturally diverse students are exponentially increasing. “with the number of ELL students expected to double in the next 20 years, schools must refine methods to distinguish between difficulties related to second language acquisition, and those related to learning disabilities” (Barker & Grassi, 2010, p. 27).

With section one of this text dedicated to understanding student backgrounds, it offered an extensive model of what many districts and schooling communities seek to achieve when it comes to supporting their students and families. This section included writing on understanding how learning a language works and how to challenge students who are becoming fluent, featuring key terms highlighted throughout, as well as activities for further understanding.

Chapter five focused most specifically on strategies for the assessment process, which is where this capstone will unpack this text with more detail. Chapter five was overviewed with three key points that the authors wanted educators to take away:

- 1) Why existing evaluation systems may not serve the needs of culturally and linguistically, diverse, exceptional students.
- 2) How current policy classifies children for special education in English learning programs.

3) What teachers can do to meet the needs of CLDE students. (Barker & Grassi, 2010, p. 109)

This chapter provided specific detail about how assessment in special education works. They also defined how they use the term assessment: it refers to the process of ascertaining the child's learning status. This means assessment in the context of the book and the world it is describing, is completely linked to systemically ascertaining a child's learning status based on teacher, instructional strategies, and teacher interventions. They talked about the *instructional/assessment cycle*, as a circular process, used to continually evaluate decisions related to the instruction of all students (Barker & Grassi, 2010, p. 111). The goal of this cycle is to learn about one particular student and provide the best instructional plan and support for that individual.

A significant factor to note is the No Child Left Behind Act mandates that US states demonstrate that all students reach proficient levels on the state's language arts and mathematics assessments. This includes English language learners, who also must meet the same academic progress goals as other students. States must demonstrate yearly progress. While assessing students on language, reading, and writing skills in English each year to determine students' progress in learning English helped the state meet its quota, these proficiency tests did not give teachers a complete picture of students' language proficiency. This is because tests were based on isolated components of the language, neglecting to measure other significant aspects of language proficiency (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

The No Child Left Behind Act stated that schools are also required to administer standardized tests to English language learners annually, with most standardized academic achievement tests requiring students to have specific culturally-based information in order to

perform well common as this is referred to as cultural bias. This left many students taking tests that are heavily biased toward the mainstream white English, with the result being students being mislabeled when they perform poorly and on tests that are not geared toward their cultural knowledge base. The author noted that assessments used to measure English proficiency can have issues that result in students receiving less than proficient scores, which did not reflect their actual level of success (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

This section also illustrated how the special education referral process is a multi step, in-depth set of procedures that can help the students address gaps in assessment through meaningful, focused, and systemic collaboration. While this is a system set in place, in practice it requires that all the variables are present to make it work. When and if a student goes through the processes of getting a referral to special education services, parental permission must be attained, and the multi-disciplinary assessment team will conduct an evaluation of the student. When, and if the student meets all of the criteria to receive services based on their evaluation results, they may be referred to have an IEP meeting, or an individualized education plan meeting. From there, teachers are legally required to monitor progress, and keep data documentation for the IEP from year to year. This is why many special education teachers will have large loads of writing tasks, as keeping track of individualized learning plans and updating them from year to year falls under special education teacher job duties in addition to teaching and running the classroom (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

Finally, this chapter highlighted the importance that the evaluators of students receiving assessments are familiar with the culture of the student, and understand the stages of cultural acquisition. If assessment tools used exhibit cultural or linguistic bias, the information gathered from these tests may be inaccurate and lead to labeling a child with a learning disability that may

not necessarily be present (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

This resource also addressed how the additional label of gifted and talented does not fall under federal guidelines; however, it does warrant discussion when talking about culturally and linguistically diverse and exceptional students. The text noted that each school has a different way to identify and label gifted and talented learners; however, many general education teachers or parents who are instrumental in the initial stage of the process of identifying gifted and talented learners, may be coming from different lenses when it comes to identifying what is gifted and talented. Many parents from other cultures other than the dominant culture do not know the process for recommending their child, and so the challenge became discerning how to know if students know what they know. To promote equal consideration of the gifts and talents of diverse students, the text advocated for schools to use multiple measures in multiple contexts to determine eligibility. The text continued to say teachers should carefully assess the achievement and behavior of diverse students by using culturally sensitive tools to capture a full picture of the student (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

This text highlighted a relevant bell hooks quote that tells teachers “to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential. We need provide these necessary conditions, where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (Barker & Grassi, 2010, p. 188).

This text stated *Culturally relevant teaching* and assessment emphasizes the following ideals: 1) developing and maintaining strong teacher/student relationships. 2) emphasizing consistent dialogue interaction. 3) Incorporating and validating space for student voice and identity. 4) making content relevant to all students in the classroom. This chapter went on to highlight examples and applications of each one of these, including case studies and photos

(Barker & Grassi, 2010).

This resource served to inform educators of the laws and policies that affect culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and how the system of education mandates educators to meet the needs of these students. It also showed examples of what assessment looks like outside of the bubble of qualitative data and highlighted what culturally and linguistically diverse students need to be successful. It set a standard for teachers in terms of what assessment looks like systemically for a specific group of students and discussed what public school teachers can expect in the instructional/assessment cycle, providing a well rounded context about what assessment can look like in schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse students (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students: Strategies for Teaching and Assessment outlined several models that apply to and inform the capstone project discussed in Chapter Three. The assessment ideals outlined in this source: 1) developing and maintaining strong teacher/student relationships, 2) emphasizing consistent dialogue interaction, 3) incorporating and validating space for student, voice, and identity, and 4) making content relevant to all students in the classroom, were affirming to culturally relevant pedagogy sources discussed in the next section of this capstone, and later inform language used in this capstone project (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

The next section of this capstone moves on from educational pedagogy and explores what education researchers are gathering about *culturally responsive pedagogy*, to further contextualize for readers this capstone's inquiry of *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

This section explores multiple lenses and viewpoints from research on *culturally responsive pedagogy*. Terms that can reflect in dance pedagogy are highlighted, such as high expectations, culturally relevant curricula, mutual respect, and achievement, exemplify how

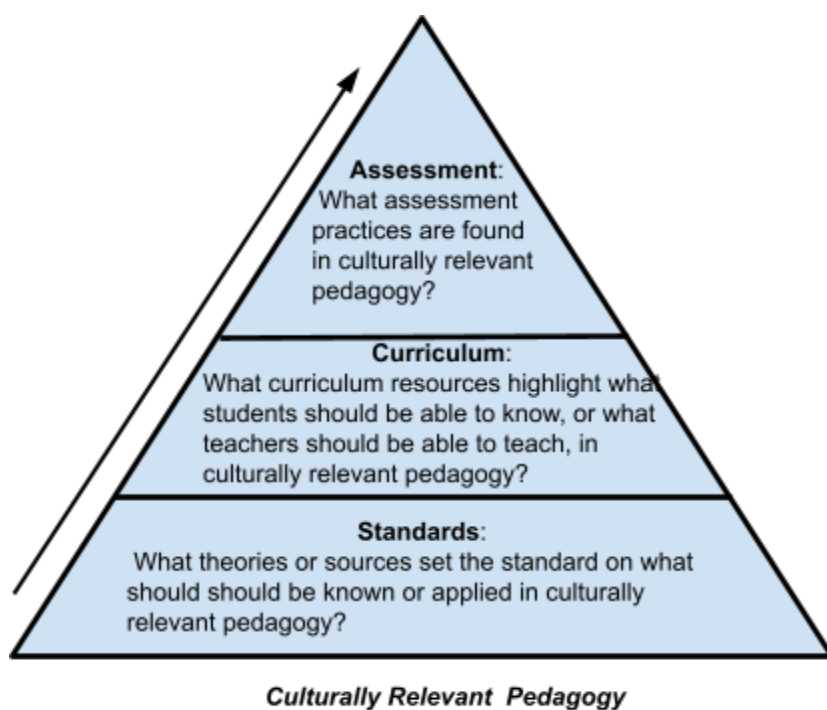


Figure 3

language from other fields can be applied in dance education when it comes to teaching dance through our diverse bodies in our diverse world. This section highlights culturally relevant pedagogical frameworks and sources to inquire *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* This section is similarly organized to section one, exploring three foundations that make up *culturally relevant pedagogy (standards, curriculum, and assessment)* and how they may model and frame how we create equitable and inclusive

assessments for success in the dance environment. A visual model of this section's organization is found in Figure 3.

Naming race in the classroom can often be a significant hurdle for many educators to navigate due to their understandings of power and privilege and their own racial backgrounds. This is juxtaposed with the socio-historical context of the communities they teach in. The *culturally responsive pedagogy* section in this capstone starts with a case study that puts into perspective many truths educators and students experience when it comes to providing culturally relevant pedagogy to a young Somali boy. *Disciplining Dalmar: a demand to uncover racism and racialization in pursuit of culturally relevant pedagogy* by Mason published in 2013, exemplified a specific student's experiences being a Somali immigrant and how the educational system they are a part of while aiming to live out an equity focused agenda, still disciplined students in a way that creates an achievement gap. This article aimed to use aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy to decrease the gap in standardized test scores between students of color and white students.

The article went on to state that these issues impact classrooms far beyond this case study at this particular school. The paper looked closely at Dalmar's experiences as examples of tensions that arise when ideas about systemic changes and ideas about student success fail to address immediate, local, and national factors at play (Mason, 2013).

The authors continued to pose to audiences the issue of the lack of integrity that exists when practices cannot be put into play with policies in place. It stated that educators can make an impact on this issue by acknowledging the political nature of teaching, and can make pedagogical shifts towards the opportunity to grapple with learning challenges operating from the point of strength and relevance found in their cultural frames of reference (Mason, 2013)

This paper began by introducing the research setting, which was a suburban, elite school that recently transformed due to district initiated changes that made the almost all white and native English speaking suburban community, to 75% of students identifying as white and the other 25% identify of people of color. The following years the student demographics continued changing, “achieving racial balance” as district leaders stated, leading to the school featured in the case study doubling the number of students of color in each classroom (Mason, 2013 p. 5). This district-led initiative draws many similarities to how the Minneapolis Public Schools’ comprehensive district design shuffled boundaries and racially identifiable schools in an effort to racially integrate, without the supports to systemically change in conjunction with how their student populations were changing (Mason, 2013).

The next part of this study focused on painting a picture of the context Dalmar found himself in. According to the paper, he wore a patch that administers ADHD medication. He was described as a jokester, moving the patch to different parts of his body to play with the adults that worked with him. The paper outlined a story of Dalmar in art class jokingly telling a teacher that he couldn’t show the teacher his medicine patch because he can’t show his butt at school. It turned out the physician who prescribed him the patch recommended him to put it on his hip. The author of this paper uncovered that in all of the interactions Dalmar had with educational assistants, there were no words directed towards Dalmar that were not reprimands or redirections (Mason, 2013).

The article additionally highlighted a particularly important part of this student's lived experience of being highly visible as the only black body in a white space, something many students of color in America who find themselves in this type of racially isolated learning environment experience (Mason, 2013).

The researcher also dedicated a section to noting their own identity, stating that it was a constant theme in the study. She stated she is a white woman entering this community with a large amount of social capital because she grew up going to school in the suburban elite school district and her mother was a teacher in the district, making her connected to the community at multiple entry points. She highlighted that her success in the district was based on this, and how her cultural and historical positionality impacted how Dalmar interpreted and perceived her as well (Mason, 2013, p. 6)

The next section of this paper was dedicated to the findings and analysis. The author further contextualized the unique position Dalmar is in as an immigrant student: he was wedded deeply to the institution of the school, and yet he was suffering there (Hyde, 2010). It then went on to outline what a typical day looks like for Damar, who received special education services as well at the school. “When he arrives each morning, he usually has about five minutes to settle into his desk before the first of many educational assistants to come to retrieve him” (Mason, 2013, p. 7). Those five minutes may be the few minutes of free time he has to interact with his peer in the authentic social world of elementary school. The educational interventions he was constantly pulled out to do were meant to improve his performance on standardized tests in reading and math while having constrained experiences at school, according to his teacher. The many district-mandated systems that were designed to make Dalmar succeed in their eyes allowed for less space for Dalmar to be his cultural self. Additionally, educators working with Dalmar were mitigating their desire to see him succeed not by shifting what was going on around him, but by addressing his perceived medical and behavioral needs (Mason, 2013).

The author argued that seeing oneself racially is a precursor to understanding how one moves about racialized situations. They highlight Ladson-Billings’ train of thought that

emphasizes that cultural competence applies to white people– both teachers and students– as much as it does to people of color, which challenges white people to recognize how their language, attitudes, and behaviors coincide with the dominant culture while also committing to learning about other non-dominant cultures. The clash between dominant and non-dominant cultures in this schooling community led to conflicting discussions about maintaining the school’s historical “excellence” versus having new conversations about “equity” (Mason, 2013 p. 10).

The author told an additional story that emphasized how it is so important for students to be able to place themselves in positive racial narratives rather than negative. One day when Dalmar was being observed, he colored himself white in a self portrait. When asked why, he said “he didn’t” [color himself white] (Mason, 2013, p. 11). This echoed Somali elders' worries about a loss of culture, and this worry became a reality when Dalmar was observed shirking his Somali self. Dalmar had some internalized notion that *black was bad* and he wanted to be good. Dalmar had identities that he wanted to bring fully to the classroom and to be known but struggled with the racialized way that the world saw him which impacted his learning experience (Mason, 2013).

The author of this paper emphasized one may frame identity development, or the child’s perception of self, as multidimensional; acknowledging many cultural factors that make up one’s perception of self. This is important to know as educators because the environment acts on the student who acts back on themselves and the environment– meaning if a student is learning in an environment they perceive at some point to be racist, they will reflect that racism on themselves and back into the environment (Mason, 2013).

Dalmar hated being different from his classmates, the article noted, and needed to feel a sense of belonging. Educational discourse must understand how a sense of self-development is necessary for student academic success and social success. “Without addressing those dynamics between student identity and student learning, there remains meaningful disconnection between the two” (Mason, 2013, p. 12).

This article started the *culturally relevant pedagogy* section of this capstone with an example of how a student who is not experiencing an equitable and inclusive classroom environment feels, and how their self image and identity within the larger context of their schooling environment affects their perception and achievement of success in the classroom. The author proposed Gloria Ladson Billing’s idea that cultural competency applies to all people in the educational environment and that every person is seen racially; they themselves may see it or live it every day, or do not want to see it. This call to people in power– educators– to become culturally competent to better help facilitate the feeling of achievement and success in students outside the dominant culture in America (Mason, 2013). This idea of promoting cultural competency amongst educators in an effort to see race in the classroom is explored and applied further in Chapter Three of this capstone.

This section in the literature review highlighted discourse in *culturally responsive pedagogy* in the areas of *standards*, *curriculum*, and *assessment* to shed further light on how educators can create learning environments where students like Dalmar can thrive. This information continues to provide context to understanding and addressing this capstone’s inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Standards in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools was a speech that took place during the 2006 Presidential Address given by Gloria Ladson Billings. This article highlighted Gloria Ladson Billings's 2006 presidential address as essential to their own work as an educator.

This text began by setting the tone and defining and contextualizing the term *achievement gap*. It referred to “disparities in the standardized test scores between black and white, Latino and white, and recent immigrants and white students” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 2). The article suggested that focusing on the gap is misplaced; rephrasing the term as *education debt* that is owed to students that have accumulated over time. The education debt combined historical, economic, social, political, and moral components, with the underlying agreement that factors like race and class continued to be strong predictors of achievement, while gender disparities have shrunk.

The author critiqued the use of the term *achievement gap*, noting that many people talk about there being an *achievement gap* without providing solutions to close it. The author argued that a focus on the *achievement gap* is like a focus on the budget deficit, but what is actually happening to African-Americans in America is really more like the national debt, stating that Americans do not have an achievement gap, but rather have an educational debt. The educational debt is the forgotten schooling resources that people could have—school resources that, if they were present, may play a role in increasing student achievement. The message the author suggested is that you need to reduce one (the education debt) in order to close the other (the achievement gap.) In other words, an achievement gap is the logical consequence of an education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

The author went on to briefly describe the historical, economic, social, political, and moral decisions, and policies that have created an education debt. After presenting quantitative examples of how education debt came to exist, the author highlighted that addressing this education debt would make schooling better for everybody. The author acknowledged that there are many ways that eliminating the achievement gap could look, and acknowledged that many people can bring many solutions to the table. They acknowledged educators must use their own imaginations to craft a set of images that eliminate the debt. More than anything, the author highlighted that we do not have an achievement gap which suggests that some students are not succeeding but an education debt owed to students so they are able to access achievement coming from their unique contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

This text was included in the standard section of this capstone because it highlighted a standard way or framework to look at student achievement and success, empowering educators to think about and consider how teachers frame success with awareness of students' cultural and historical context. The author of this text wanted readers to take away the main idea that teachers must play a role in zeroing out the educational debt owed to students so they are able to experience equitable and inclusive achievement and that one way educators can do that is by reframing the vocabulary they use to define student success (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools empowered educators to play a role in transforming the system of education by transforming the way they speak about success, which was a main idea that informed the language behind the dance curriculum and assessment resource discussed in Chapter Three of this capstone.

An additional resource which used a less theoretical and more applicable framework is

Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching, Geneva Gay, 2001. This resource highlights a framework in which educators can use to build their foundation on culturally responsive teaching. This work applies to many educators of many content areas working with many different students. In this article, the author argued to improve the school success of ethnically, diverse students through culturally responsive teaching. They additionally argued the need to prepare teachers in training with knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to do this. Five elements of culturally responsive teaching were examined: 1) *Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity*. 2) *Including ethnically diverse students in the curriculum*. 3) *Demonstrating caring in building learning communities*. 4) *Communicating with ethnically diverse students*, and 5) *Responding to ethnic diversity and the delivery of instruction*. The author, in each of these sections, gave examples of what these practices look like and highlighted where they come from, with brief summaries of these practices as follows:

- 1) *Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base*: The author highlighted one issue which exists when it comes to schools effectively teaching diversity is that some programs spend time and energy deciding where are the most “appropriate places”, to talk about race because it could be a sensitive political issue. Schools often take visible steps such as awareness, showing respect, and general recognition of other cultures but this article argued that culturally responsive teaching requires teachers know detailed factual information about the cultural participation of specific ethnic groups and create a place for diversity to be talked about in every subject at school. (Gay, 2001 p. 101)
- 2) *Designing a culturally relevant curriculum*. The author first highlighted current trends in diverse curriculum, stating that many educational institutions are:

avoiding controversial issues, focusing on the same accomplishments in the same few high-profile individuals, showing over-representation African-Americans than other groups of color, decontextualizing women and their issues, ignoring poverty, and emphasizing certain information about the silent other kinds of issues and knowledge. The author highlighted that culturally responsive teaching deals directly with controversy. The meaning behind this is that over time, students can come to expect certain images. They can learn to value what is present, and devalue that which is absent. CRT advocates for reaching into the invisible and making it visible. (Gay, 2001, p. 102)

- 3) *Demonstrating cultural caring building learning community.* The author highlighted that culturally responsive caring places teachers in an ethical and academic partnership with students that is anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a belief in the possibility of change. The author argued for teachers to become culturally relevant educators so students can experience, holistic, or integrated learning. CRT creates space for everybody to show up fully in the classroom so that their knowledge matters. Educators want students to understand that knowledge has moral and political elements and consequences, which sparks students to take social action. (Gay, 2001, p. 106)
- 4) *Cross cultural communications.* The author stated that effective cross cultural communication is essential because as they quote on page 110, “communication is the ground of meeting and the foundation of community among humans.” Without this meeting and community in the classroom, the author states learning is difficult to accomplish for some students. She added that determining what

ethnically diverse students know and what they are able to do can often be a function of how well teachers can communicate with their students. (Gay, 2001, p. 110)

- 5) *Cultural congruity in classroom instruction.* The author stated that all teachers have culture therefore culture is deeply embodied in teaching — so teaching diverse students must be multiculturalized. She stated that there is a need for teachers to take culture into their curriculum. This means that they need to spend a high percentage of instructional time to give example scenarios in vignettes to demonstrate how information principles concepts and skills operate in practice. This practice of giving relevant examples is called a *pedagogical bridge*, which are examples that connect prior knowledge with new knowledge, and the known to the unknown. When teachers can develop rich repertoires of multicultural instruction, students have more entry points to learning and understanding. The author stated that because culture strongly influences the attitudes, values and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the learning process, culture can likewise be a large factor in how the problem of underachievement is solved. (Gay, 2001, p. 111)

The author argued that because the United States education system is not very grounded in the needs of ethnically diverse students, students are expected to separate themselves from their culture and learn according to European American cultural norms. If educators can remove the barriers to learning by creating cultural congruity in the classroom, it may play a significant contribution in improving their academic success (Gay, 2001).

This resource set an applicable and timely standard for how educators should be

approaching culturally relevant teaching and learning in their classrooms. While this source does not use language educators may typically associate with standards such as anchors and benchmarks, it encapsulated and intersected with much of Gloria Ladson Bilings' work featured in several sources in this capstone, and organized it in a way that educators may apply to their own practice. It particularly reemphasized the notion that all teachers have a race, and similarly how all people have culture (Gay, 2001).

A particular takeaway from this resource was its strong applications to the real world of teaching exemplified in its five tenants designed to prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to the practice of culturally responsive teaching: 1) *Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity*. 2) *Including ethnically diverse students in the curriculum*. 3) *Demonstrating caring in building learning communities*. 4) *Communicating with ethnically diverse students*, and 5) *Responding to ethnic diversity and the delivery of instruction* (Gay, 2001). These attitudes and beliefs in culturally responsive teaching inform the examples in the dance curriculum and assessment resource further outlined in Chapter Three of this capstone.

An additional source that standardized information on culturally responsive teaching were the *Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards*, published by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2022. It is featured in this capstone because it is an organized resource that features actionable items and values from research based sources, designed specially as a resource for culturally responsive teachers and leaders. It is organized into eight sections with additional subsections.

- 1) *Self-awareness and relationship to others*. This section asked culturally responsive teachers and leaders to reflect and gain deeper understanding of themselves, and how they impact others. This included affirming the validity of the students' backgrounds and

identities, as well as recognizing how their identity affects their perspectives and beliefs about pedagogy and students.

- 2) *Systems of oppression*. This section asked culturally responsive teachers and leaders to understand the systems in our society, including our school system, that create and reinforce inequities. Educators work actively against the systems, and the culturally responsive teacher and leader will know and understand how systems of inequity has impacted them as an educator.
- 3) *Students as individuals*. Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will not just see students within the context of the families and communities, but as individuals, setting holistic goals for students that accommodate multiple ways of demonstrating strengths and success (alternate academic achievement, metrics, growth, indicators, leadership, etc.)
- 4) *Students as co-creators*. Culturally responsive teachers and leaders believe all students are capable learners, and co-creators, with emphasis on prioritizing historically marginalized students. This section particularly emphasized that educators will create with students the collective expectations regarding the physical space and social emotional culture in the classroom and school.
- 5) *Leveraging student advocacy*. Culturally responsive educators and leaders will support opportunities for student advocacy representation in and out of the classroom. A subsection of this tenant was “communicate high expectations to which all students can be held and allow students to lead as appropriate to the students, age and development.” (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022, p. 5)

- 6) Section F highlighted that families and communities should be collaborative, and in mutual relationship with teachers and leaders.
- 7) Section G highlighted that culturally responsive teachers and leaders intentionally bring in student identities and prioritize representation in the curriculum, and emphasized student representation in the learning environment. It stated that culturally relevant teachers and leaders ensure the diversity of their student population is equally representative within curricular materials, helping all members feel seen, heard, and affirmed. (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022, p. 5)

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards was an additional resource in this section that set a standard for how educators can discern what is important in a teaching and learning environment. One resource highlighted the theoretical framework of the educational debt and why it is important for educators to work towards shrinking it, and the other mapped out a tangible framework for education teachers and leaders to put belief into practice. Both *Achievement Gap* and *Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching* were resources in this capstone which contributed to the bank of knowledge that educators must continue developing when it comes to practicing culturally responsive teaching, further supporting the research and validity found in Teaching and Leading standards (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022).

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards was a resource that models a detailed and organized set of standards for teachers and leaders who value equity in education. This resource not only echoed tenants found in Gloria Ladson Billings' culturally relevant teaching framework, but also left teachers and leaders utilizing it with an organized guide to understand and apply culturally responsive teaching in their practice. This resource informs the dance curriculum and assessment resource further outlined in Chapter Three of this capstone by

providing a model in which to frame culturally responsive teaching values and practices to dance educators.

Curriculum in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Next, this capstone explores what curriculum in culturally responsive pedagogy can look like, starting with an example from NYU Steinhardt's perspective derived from their website on the question, *what is curriculum?*

People use the word "curriculum" to mean very different things. In this context, curriculum means the detailed package of learning goals; units and lessons that lay out what teachers teach each day and week; assignments, activities and projects given to students; and books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in the class. Curriculum can take the form of a textbook and teacher's manual bought from a publisher, a notebook of lesson plans pulled together from various sources, or a reading list with a packet of matching activities created by teachers. Curriculum is different from a syllabus, which is an outline of the topics covered in the class; a booklist, which is a list of readings without activities; and standards, which are the expectations for what students should know at each grade level. Standards are what students should know and be able to do, and curriculum lays out how students will learn to do it. (New York University, 2023)

This research was a great example of how learning institutions communicate to families what to look for, and what to talk about when it comes to curriculum, as well as highlighted the many ways educators may interact with curriculum. While this resource did not lay out curriculum specifically for educators to follow, it invited educators and educational stakeholders to take a broader look into what curriculum is. This resource contained culturally responsive

curricular scorecards that families can download for the English language arts curriculum to see the extent in which English language arts, science, technology, engineering arts, and mathematics curriculum are or are not culturally responsive. The scorecard was designed by New York City parents, students, educators, and institutions, outlining a step-by-step process to complete the curriculum scorecard. Often when educators or students have a rubric on what to look for, they can design their curriculum and lessons based on that, and the scorecard uses many research based practices to provide quantitative tracking and scoring on how culturally relevant practices are showing up in the classroom (New York University, 2023).

An additional resource in the culturally relevant teaching section in this capstone is titled *Culturally Responsive Classroom Ideas*, published by a Hawaii-based education organization called Affect, which featured a series of online lessons that respond to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds in need of students and families. The intention behind this resource was to activate educators' focus on family engagement as essential to teaching. It featured five online modules with lessons that can either be taught by teachers or facilitated by parents with their students. Each module featured three sections: section one included the theory and research informing each module, with audio and visual contributions from different stakeholders in the community. Section two of each module included ways to put the conceptual models into practice, providing concrete activities teachers may use. Section three of each module included materials related to family engagement such as websites, books, and videos (Affect, 2023)

A core component Affect emphasized was family engagement, providing audiences with summaries in the following categories: 1) What is family engagement? 2) Family engagement frameworks. 3) Family engagement in schools. 4) What educators need to learn about family engagement, and 5) family engagement in Hawaii. This research provided an in-depth and

specified framework for coaching a specific group of family and students. It can be applied to many different learning, contexts, and organizational structure, while its main tenants of engaging with families offers much to educators who need to build relationships with families in order to see more success and connection in the classroom (Affect, 2023)

Both Affect and NYU Steinhardt laid out online curriculum resources accessible for teachers that can also be utilized by parents. NYU Steinhardt defined a robust and encompassing idea of what educators and parents can consider curriculum and additionally provided the resource of a culturally responsive curriculum scorecard, which was a 20 page document highlighting who made the scorecard, its intended use, and rubrics that caregivers can use to score and tally the curriculum educators are teaching their students. It required caregivers to access their child's or school's curriculum, choose the grades and units to analyze, conduct and score the evaluation, and encouraged them to share the score to promote further dialogue and discussion (Affect, 2023). This in depth resource informed the modeling of the dance curriculum and assessment project discussed further in Chapter Three of this capstone.

Affect additionally highlighted culturally relevant frameworks specified for students with a specific cultural background, with a particular emphasis on parent communication. The way it was organized by modules divided into lessons, with Hawaii teacher performance standards on the same webpage as the lesson overviews and examples, exemplified one way an educational organization can make information accessible to both parents and teachers, while connecting to state mandated standards that impact what teachers must do and understand to ensure a culturally relevant learning environment (Affect, 2023).

Assessment in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* section of this capstone first sought to inform

readers on *standards* and *curriculum* that inform how educators should frame and practice culturally responsive teaching. Next, the *assessment* portion in this section sought to highlight how culturally responsive teaching and learning can be assessed.

An article which highlighted and critiqued the need for assessment and what educators choose to assess in this capstone is titled, *Culturally, sensitive, relevant, responsive, and sustaining assessment. Are there limits to make large scale standardized testing culturally responsive?* (Evans, 2021). This article stated that “assessment practices do far more than provide information; they shape peoples understanding about what’s important to learn, what learning is, and who learners are (Evans, 2021, p. 3). Published on the Center for Assessment’s webpage, and started with getting clear on the meaning of terms related to *sensitivity, relevance, responsive, and sustaining*.

The writer acknowledged that they pulled the terms from several sources that have been evolving over the past several decades, and will likely continue to evolve. They additionally acknowledged that recent conversations in the educational measurement field have raised questions about if large scale standardized tests can even be designed and implemented in ways that are more culturally, sensitive, relevant, responsive, or sustaining (Evans, 2021).

The author then identified challenges associated with large scale, standardized testing, articulating *what* about assessment needs to be more culturally responsive, and *how* assessment can be designed to be more culturally responsive and inclusive of student identity. Ultimately, the author posed enduring questions educators are asking: for whom is the assessment context/scenario controversial? Is cultural neutrality actually racist because it defaults to the dominant culture? (Evans, 2021).

The author continued by interrogating what *standardized* means, and inquiring what purpose standardized tests serve. Evans (2021) emphasized that standardization is usually required when test scores are intended to be used for high stake purposes, just such as school accountability, and creating school budgets. “If standardization as the opposite of individualization, how can a test represent culturally responsive, educational values” (Evans, 2021). The author articulated that what may be culturally relevant, responsive, or sustaining for one is not culturally relevant, responsive, or sustaining for all, creating a significant challenge ahead for large scale, standardized tests at the level of individualization needed. This remains quite contrary to the way tests are designed and implemented.

The author concluded that classroom systems are obviously affected by state and content standards and accountability, but teachers can and do adapt their curriculum and assessment practices to their students. The author suggested and concluded that the solution requires balance, noting that culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining assessment practices should occur and are completely appropriate for classroom instruction and assessment. The author emphasized good assessment and inclusive education do not need to be mutually exclusive (Evans, 2021).

This perspective is essential to the culturally relevant assessment discourse and highlighted how assessment is not just based on what a teacher wants a student to be able to know or do, but also that the state often dictates what should be taught; this invited audiences to examine the power at play when it comes to the inherent process and impact of assessment. *Culturally, sensitive, relevant, responsive, and sustaining assessment* additionally used terminology coined by Gloria Ladson Billings and elaborated on how the term has evolved and can be used interchangeably with other terms to achieve the same effect. This text brought an

important consideration forward and played a key role in helping readers frame the political nature of standards in education in this capstone. By coming to a common understanding of what *standardization* means in the world of education, one can apply this knowledge to dance standards (Evans, 2021).

Chapter Three of this capstone took this political view of standardization into account when the MN Dance Standards 2018 are further utilized to help readers understand factors at play in this capstone's inquiry: *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

While educators, researchers, and other educational stakeholders spent time and resources to create assessments and standards, another article highlighted student experiences of inclusive assessment. The 2021 publication titled, *How do students experience inclusive assessment? A critical review of contemporary literature* was co-authored by Australian educators Tai & Ajjaw and highlighted research seeking to examine inclusive classroom assessment designs. They acknowledged that universal design for assessment had not been widely implemented within the field of education and that assessment designers should consider the ways in which assessment practices may be exclusive to some students, as well as how a wider spectrum of students may be included when it comes to designing and creating an assessment.

Their research was focused on a higher learning environment, with the researchers acknowledging how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provided clear pathways for course design in higher education. Despite this, students from diverse backgrounds still reported assessment as a significant challenge within higher education— with a large part being,

assessment strategies did not account for and adapt to increasingly diverse student populations (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021).

Although authors highlighted that anti-discrimination laws required reasonable adjustments and changes to be accommodated for some groups of students, a systematic approach to widening participation through inclusive assessment had not been created (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021).

The authors began by framing Universal Design as seeking to design learning environments to be as accessible as possible from the outset to as many people as possible. With UD principles providing multiple means of engagement, applied to assessment it means that assessment tasks should be achieved in a variety of ways, and there should be options for students to demonstrate their capabilities. While this would particularly help students with learning or sensory disabilities, it was unlikely to fully account for broader student diversity. The authors highlighted that accommodations and adjustments were common approaches to inclusive assessment, but universities generally had processes where students needed to declare their disability or submit medical records to gain access to their specifically needed assessment accommodations. They continued to state that this individual accommodation approach risks perpetuating a deficit discourse that focuses on the source of access concern, rather than an inaccessible system (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021, p. 3). Additionally, staff with a deficit view of disability may be reluctant to offer adjustments due to perceptions of unfairness, or they did not know how.

With this being one of many factors the authors outline as a need for change, they came back to Universal Design, and how within this learning structure there was a need to critically review research on inclusive assessment outcomes. With this in mind, the authors' research

questions throughout the study were: *who are the students targeted in inclusive assessment?*

What are the effects/outcomes for students of inclusive assessment? What recommendation does the literature make about designing inclusive assessment?

After reviewing and discerning contemporary sources that addressed inclusive assessment design, the authors highlighted several studies that focused on the outcomes of implemented inclusive assessments. Under the *student perceptions and outcome of assessment* section, the authors noted the need to disclose a disability to access more inclusive versions of assessment through accommodations made students feel uncomfortable (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021, p. 9). In contrast, for linguistically diverse students, there was increased self esteem, self efficacy, and reduced anxiety when opportunities for choice assessment arose.

In the next section, the authors outlined recommendations for inclusive assessment design based on the information they gathered. They highlighted that collaboration (between students, staff, and disability support staff) and co-design was suggested to contribute to “better learning outcomes (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021, p. 10). They also emphasized the importance of staff awareness and education about diverse students, and how to best support their needs.

In this research based inquiry into assessment design, the authors noted that offering choices, while a popular way to meet individual needs, can put educators in the position to never re-design assessments which can make them inherently not inclusive. “The tinkering at the edges might again distract from considering more radical changes to assessment design and systems of assessment” (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021, p. 11). While this research study was not based on the same racial background or statistics as students in the United States, and additionally took place in higher education rather than primary, some practices and conclusions are applicable. The researchers acknowledged that their review had some strengths and limitations. Firstly, they

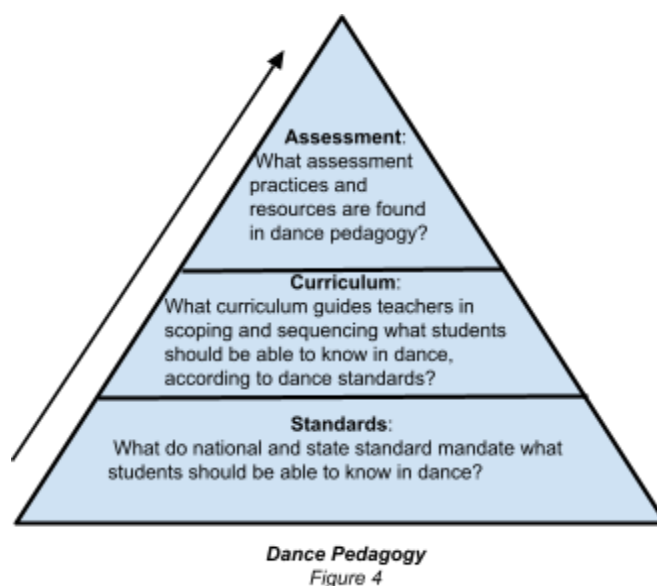
restricted their search to contemporary practices, so a further review of literature, focusing on assessment, with a more extended timeframe could show additional results. They also highlighted that the majority of studies were small scale research projects, taking place in a particular contexts, usually with academics writing about their own practices. Additionally, reporting biases exist within the field of education, so reviewing published literature may be insufficient in capturing instances where inclusive assessment implementation was successful, or unsuccessful. The authors emphasized that future studies in this field of research are needed to examine the longer-term effects of inclusive assessment. They ended by stating that a further conversation about transformation of the assessment towards inclusivity would be encouraged to help students experience a more holistic approach to their learning experience (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021).

This study confirmed that assessment is an important practice within culturally relevant pedagogy, and acknowledged that the way assessments are designed or given is rooted in a system that may be inherently culturally exclusive without taking specific steps to assure that student assessment is aligned with culturally relevant teaching values. A main takeaway from *How do students experience inclusive assessment? A critical review of contemporary literature* was specifically how students responded to inclusive assessment; the article stated that the linguistically diverse students felt increased self esteem, self efficacy, and reduced anxiety when opportunities for choice assessment arose. With choice assessment being a key feature in Universal Design, educators can take this key feature and apply it to their own content areas to work towards equitable and inclusive assessment in the classroom (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021). Chapter Three of this capstone incorporated choice assessment from the Universal Design model for learning, utilizing choice assessments in the curriculum and assessment resource designed for

dance educators. This continues to support this capstone's inquiry of *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Dance Pedagogy

The third and final part of this literature review focuses on what researchers have learned about *dance pedagogy* and explores *dance pedagogy* strategies that are researched and practiced by a variety of local and international dance professionals. The *dance pedagogy* section is similarly organized to the previous two sections, first with a focus on *dance standards*, then on *dance curriculum*, and finally *dance assessment*. The organizational structure of this section and its accompanying inquiries is featured in Figure 4.



Dance pedagogy, in this capstone, is defined by how dance teachers are teaching dance content in a K-12 setting. In this section, sources that expand upon dance standards, dance curriculum, and dance assessment are highlighted; what may be lacking in the dance pedagogy world in relation to general educational pedagogy world is noted as well. The cultural lenses and backgrounds of several dance researcher sources will be emphasized, connecting how teacher

identity informs how dance is taught. Including teacher identity in dance pedagogy connects to what teachers believe or value students should be able to know or do, as stated by multiple sources in the *culturally relevant pedagogy* section of this chapter, and is a key idea pioneered by Gloria Ladson Billings (1998). Building this foundation of dance pedagogy in juxtaposition with teacher identity will help in framing the reader's knowledge in creating equitable and inclusive dance assessment strategies.

Standards in Dance Pedagogy

Teaching Dance as Art in Education, a text published in 2006 by Brenda Pugh McCutchen, provided a framework that informed both the Minnesota Dance Standards 2018 and the National Core Standards for the Arts in Dance.

The textbook was divided into three parts with part one titled *exploring understanding dance as arts education*, part two titled *clarifying the content of K-12 educational dance*, and part three titled *presenting dance in arts education*. It also included three appendices: Appendix A features a reference list of concepts, appendix B features forms, checklists, sample items, and articles, and Appendix C includes professional organizations and national initiatives related to teaching dance in arts education. It also included a glossary of terms and concludes with an about the author section (Pugh, 2006).

Part one had five chapters entitled 1) *Viewing educational dance from an arts education perspective*, 2) *examining how national arts initiatives affect dance*, 3) *adopting your roles and responsibilities for teaching*, 4) *emphasizing aspects of student-centered learning*, and 5) *identifying the cornerstones of dance as art in education*. Some notable highlights to take away from Chapter 1 were its framing in helping educators view educational dance from an all-the-arts education perspective. This is important because in Minnesota, there was no dance or theater

licensure until 2003; the national standards helped frame the local standards, helping dance education to stand alongside other areas of arts in education (Pugh, 2006).

The chapter began by defining characteristics of educational dance: highlighting that educational dance differs from a traditional classroom model, and stating “growing numbers of elementary classroom teachers value movement-based education to increase conceptual learning in subject areas, openly incorporating dance” (Pugh, 2006, p. 8). This resource highlighted that specialist teachers teaching dance can become a resource for general education teachers seeking age-appropriate dance and movement materials to support academic learning.

It defines the characteristics of educational dance as:

- 1) comprehensive (broad in scope)
- 2) substantive (challenging and significant)
- 3) sequential (ordered and incremental)
- 4) aesthetically driven (seeking fine quality)
- 5) contextually coherent (relevant and related)
- 6) inquiry-based (participatory and investigative) (Pugh, 2006, p. 8)

This source argued that the first three characteristics are the base for the rest; without the first three, the last three would be ineffective. This source examined all six characteristics, referring to these six characteristics as the six Cornerstone model of inquiry-based educational dance, or the 6 DC cornerstone model.

The author particularly highlighted the sequential content and instruction approach: sequencing keeps content from being redundant and repetitive, introducing concepts at one stage and developing them later on. They emphasized that there are three ways educators can keep

content and instruction sequentially progressing: 1) ensure that learning is non-repetitive, 2) use a spiral curriculum approach and 3) see the big picture before planning the details (Pugh, 2006).

Chapter 2 of *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* continued to examine national dance content and achievement standards. It started by saying that the consortium National Arts Education Association oversaw the writing of national art standards, setting out to establish world-class standards and aiming to reflect the field of dance aspirations. The consortium listed seven *content standards* that described in general what students should be able to know and do in dance. The consortium then wrote *achievement standards* that described specific levels of competence expected in different grade levels. The *content standards* and the *achievement standards* work together to identify “what every young American should know and be able to competently do in K-12 dance” (Pugh, 2006, p. 25).

The seven content standards were the same for all students in all grade levels:

- 1) identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills and performing dance.
- 2) understanding of choreographic principles, processes, and structures.
- 3) understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
- 4) applying and demonstrating critical and creative, thinking skills in dance
- 5) demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods.
- 6) making connections between dance and health for living, and
- 7) making connections between dance and other disciplines. (Pugh, 2006, p .25)

The corresponding achievement standards were grouped into three grade level distinctions: grades K-5, grades 5-8, and grades 9-12. The authors stated that learners are expected to make progress through early elementary through high school. Students can meet basic to proficient to advanced levels of achievement. The achievement standards conveyed clear

and attainable age-level benchmarks for each art form, including dance, music, theater, and other content areas.

An additional standard that this text referenced is the national report card. The national report card comes from a government entity that oversees national student assessments, passed by Congress in 1988. Although the system is not put into practice currently due to budget constraints and a lack of sample dance programs to statistically validate the assessment program, the framework depicted an integrated arts experience for American youth for dance education that is meaningful, and attainable (Pugh, 2006).

Part one finished with chapter 5, *identifying four cornerstones of dance as art in education*, and highlighted how the cornerstones lay the foundation for educator accountability. The text defined the four educational dance cornerstones as follows:

- 1) Cornerstone 1: dancing and performing. (Performing)
- 2) Cornerstone 2: creating and composing (creating)
- 3) Cornerstone 3: knowing history, culture, and context (knowing about)
- 4) Cornerstone 4: analyzing and critiquing (responding) (Pugh, 2006, p. 102)

The author emphasized that when cornerstones are taught well, they individually and collectively ensure that dance education is comprehensive. They emphasized that students who experience all four cornerstones know and respond to dance through the choreographic works of others in themselves, and through their own dancing bodies, showing that cornerstones can overlap to support each other. This source stated that the foundational disciplines in dance, or cornerstones, do not change; every 8 to 10 years while the national standards may change. The author additionally highlighted that the cornerstones represented dance experiences from four artistic viewpoints: 1) dancer as dancer, 2) dancer as critic, 3) dancer as historian, and 4) dancer

as choreographer. The author emphasized that all of these points of entry support dance students in understanding the dance experience from multiple perspectives. The author argued that to teach dance successfully, one must not only teach each cornerstone but also relate one cornerstone to another. They continued to state that, while there may be reasons to isolate the cornerstones for instruction, cross-referencing and integrating them also helps students have *enduring understandings* (Pugh, 2006).

The author elaborated on the idea of *enduring understandings* by stating that concepts come out of the dance cornerstones; and although national standards identify what students should know and be able to do a dance, conceptual understandings go beyond that. The author articulated that students were expected to surpass *knowing* so that they can get to *understanding based on knowing* (Pugh, 2006).

The author additionally highlighted that the cornerstones are the basis for the curriculum, and standards are the basis for keeping the curriculum on track and measuring student achievement. They acknowledged that operating a class on standards alone would be one-sided and that students need goals and objectives so educators know where their class is going and how to get their students there. Standards only tell teachers what students have to know and be able to do, which is why authors advocate that dance teachers need both standards and cornerstones to write dance curricula (Pugh, 2006).

The author continued to state that using goals and objectives keeps dance educators focused on student outcomes, bringing dance education from the textual to the physical. They highlighted that goals and content standards are the abstract vision, statement, or big picture. The author advocated for dance educators to utilize goals to “drive the boat”, and utilize objectives to “steer to where you’re going”, asking educators to write goals based on what they

deem important for their students to know (Pugh, 2006, p. 117). They encouraged educators to take these goals and incorporate standards to ensure that they are going in the right direction. Then with specific grade levels, designing dance experiences and scaffolding them gets students moving towards the goal by way of the objective.

Part three went on to discuss in depth the four cornerstones, including how they relate to national standards. Chapter 13 in part three had an example of a lesson that integrates the cornerstones, which serve as a valuable tool for educators. It emphasized that the eight-step lesson plan is looked at as a resource to help dancers organize their lessons while letting go of rigidly controlling the creative process of lesson planning. It stated that the eight step plan is a mix and match process, identifying essential components in a lesson that can be mixed and matched, potentially reorganizing the same components and getting different results every time. The author emphasized that this process relies on educator knowledge of dance as well as educator creativity (Pugh, 2006, p. 411). It was organized in a grid that outlines the when, what, how, processes, and viewpoints that are required for a complete lesson. The eight-step plan incorporates all cornerstones and artistic processes into an integrated lesson format.

This resource ended with an *about the author* section, highlighting how the author was a dance education consultant and had taught in departments in theater and dance at various colleges in America. The author named their professional accreditations, their 35-year arts career, and their academic contributions to the field. Nowhere in the book did the author highlight their race, ethnic background, or culture, or give any indication of their identity other than their headshot (Pugh, 2006).

Teaching Dance as Art in Education is an in-depth resource for dance educators in a K-12 setting, framing where dance stands in an educational setting and highlighting a researched based

scope and sequence for dance educators to utilize. It featured sequential learning and spiral curriculum as methods to create both broad and deep knowledge of dance. Its common core inspired organization and language structure framed dance as a content area worthy of assisting general education learning, to help general education teachers see the value of dance. It used similar ideas to this capstone's previously mentioned use of *concepts* and *generalizations*, naming them as *goals* and *objectives*. In Chapter Three, this resource's eight-step lesson plan is utilized to model the dance assessment and lesson planning resource due to its strong and relevant language in dance standards.

An additional source that set the standard in this capstone specifically for dance educators in Minnesota was the *MN K-12 Dance Standards*, revised in 2018 by a team of dance teachers and leaders throughout the greater Twin Cities. This section lays a framework of what the current state standards say students should be able to do. Contrasting the *MN K-12 Dance Standards* with other sources in this chapter helps readers compare and contrast varied perspectives on standard models to further inquire on this capstone's area of inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

The MN Dance Standards were organized by *strand*, *anchor standard*, and *benchmark*. These terms were defined in the *2018 Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts Glossary*. While the MN K-12 dance standards outline strands, anchor standards, and benchmarks for all grades, this capstone will focus on what students should be able to do in second grade.

The four foundational strands are: create, perform, respond, and connect. The first strand of *create* referred to the process of generating original art, including conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work. The second strand *perform* referred to the process of realizing

artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation. Third, *respond* referred to the process of analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating how the arts convey meaning. Fourth, *connect* referred to the process of relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external content (MN Dance Standards 2018).

Following the strands were the *anchor standards*, which ask students to use foundational knowledge and skills while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work. The anchor standards for second grade within the *create* strand were as follows:

1. Generate and develop original artistic ideas
2. Create original artistic work
3. Revise and complete original artistic work.

Next are the anchor standards for *perform*:

4. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for performance
5. Make artistic choices in order to convey meaning through performance

Following *perform* are the anchor standards for *respond*:

6. Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work
7. Evaluate artistic work by applying criteria

Finally the anchor standards for *connect*

8. Integrate knowledge and personal experiences while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work.
9. Understanding that artistic works influence and are influenced by personal, societal, cultural, and historical contexts, including the contributions of the Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities. (Perpich Center, 2018)

Last in this resource were the corresponding *benchmarks*, which divide the *anchor standards* into practicable and tangible skills of what students are expected to do—for example, *demonstrate locomotor and non-locomotor movements by any given stimuli*, or *improvise movement within a simple dance structure and identify the structure*.

This resource for K-12 dance educators in the state of Minnesota utilized a similar structure highlighted in *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* to articulate how dance learning should be organized. It additionally addressed the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities which highlighted cultural context specifically as a standard that dance teachers should incorporate (Perpich Center, 2018). In Chapter Three, the dance standards were incorporated to create a curriculum and assessment resource aimed at helping teachers connect the dance standards to their own curriculum.

The *Minnesota Department of Education Academic Standards in the Arts Glossary, 2018* is an accompanying resource to the *MN K-12 Dance Standards*. This 25 page PDF resource began by summarizing strand definitions for all arts areas. It highlighted and describes four *foundations*, or “the underlying knowledge and skills which are the building blocks of working in each arts area. Foundational knowledge and skills support student learning in the four artistic processes of Create, Perform/Present, Respond, and Connect. They include but are not limited to, the elements, principles, artistic vocabulary, and technical skills of each arts area. They may vary depending on the cultural and historical context” (Perpich Center, 2018, p. 1).

This source had vocabulary definitions of all the arts terms organized by content area, with dance terms listed on pages two through five. The terms on the glossary intersected with those terms found in the K-12 Minnesota Arts standards. This resource ended with an appendix that breaks down how to read each five-digit benchmark code that identifies the *arts area*, *grade*,

strand, anchor standard, and benchmark. It highlighted the background of the arts standards, stating that Minnesota is in the process of adopting the 2018 Academic Standards in the Arts by the 2021-2022 school year, with a review of arts standards occurring during the 2027-2028 school year. This source additionally cited the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (2014) and other state standards as resources that informed the making of the standards.

It is essential to highlight the Minnesota Arts Glossary and Minnesota Arts standards in conjunction with each other to see how they were created and shaped based on national standards and cultivated specifically for Minnesota teachers. Both the Minnesota Arts Glossary and the Minnesota arts standards are robust resources for dance teachers, and understanding the content and context of these sources better helps readers understand the inquiry of this capstone, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* Chapter Three utilized these resources to create a teaching curriculum and assessment tool which directly correlates to the Minnesota state standards.

One last additional standards resource which provides context for readers of this capstone is the *National Core Arts Dance Standards*. While the *MN Dance Standards 2018* for second grade highlighted clear and concise benchmarks and have broad strands consistent across all arts content areas in Minnesota, the question of how teachers can assess student knowledge remains. *The National Core Arts Standards* (NCAS) in dance found on the National Dance Education Organization website (2022) provided another model of what arts standards can look like. Aimed at helping students achieve dance literacy, it featured resources including lessons, units, Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs), and curriculum maps as well as guidance documents to help educators understand and implement the standards. This resource provided a robust and

interactive map for dance educators to explore standards and curriculum guides, and additionally connected dance educators to professional developments available through the National Dance Education Organization. Much of what the *Minnesota Standards* and *Minnesota Arts Glossary* provided to teachers is also iterated on a larger scale in *The National Core Arts Standards* (NCAS). The NCAS lesson planning templates for second grade were used in conjunction with other lesson planning resources in this capstone project, further articulated in Chapter Three. Utilizing and referencing the NCAS lesson planning templates to create a dance curriculum and assessment resource further leads readers towards this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Location of Possibilities: Exploring Dance Technique Pedagogy Through Transformation and Care, published by Dryburgh in 2018, was an additional perspective on what it looks like to create a standard or expectation in a dance learning environment. This article emphasized how learning through dance technique has the potential to transform students, in terms of what their bodies can do and their sense of self in the world. Exploring a research study of learning through the accounts of undergraduate students at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, the seven participant study brought insight into how transformation might be enabled in dance technique pedagogy. Additionally, this article emphasized active participation, demonstration of care, and a stimulating dance classroom environment as parts of what make the dance classroom a place of transformation (Dryburgh 2018).

The term "location of possibility" was coined by bell hooks (1994, p. 90) to "describe the potential of the classroom to enable emancipatory change", as stated in the article. Hooks was attributed to the theoretical perspective of engaged pedagogy (1994), while Noddings was

attributed to care ethics (2013); both provide a framework that impacts the classroom environment. While in this article it refers to learning in higher education as a site of transformation, these concepts can be applied to the context of this Capstone. Similarly stating this idea is John Dirkx (1998), who described transformative learning as “a way of being that emphasizes how the student encounters and engages with the learning experience” (Dryburgh 2018 p. 9).

Transformative learning is applicable in the dance classroom because it brings to the forefront the idea of a dance student as a whole person, who is able to actively contribute to learning through shared responsibility. The term *engaged pedagogy* coined by hooks significantly states that “learning at its most powerful can liberate by creating a pedagogical environment that is resistant to the principles of obedience and authority” (Dryburgh 2018 p. 10). Hooks further stated that respect and care are central to engaged pedagogy, as they form relationships of trust in the learning environment. Care is an area of ethics theory that has been highlighted throughout feminist perspectives that take on the issue of detachment experienced in a patriarchal society. With both transformative learning and care ethics playing a role in how students and teachers are relating in the classroom environment, they become mutually supportive theoretical frameworks that may be applied to the dance classroom.

This article used these frameworks to create a research study aimed at hearing about student experiences of the roles of teacher and student, and what was enabling them to learn in contemporary dance techniques. The participants were five women and two men in their late teens and early twenties at Trinity Laban over the course of several years throughout their undergraduate experience. The research results were in the form of a discussion organized around three core conceptions of engaged pedagogy: Active participation in learning by the

student, demonstration of the value teachers place in the student, and stimulating learning environments among peers (Dryburgh, 1992).

This article additionally highlighted the idea that teachers should model vulnerability and self care. hooks (1994) further expanded on engaged pedagogy, asserting that teachers might only be effective in fostering transformation with students by being involved in an ongoing process of their own self actualization. In doing so, the teacher “will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply” (Dryburgh 2018, p. 94). The researcher highlighted that students need models of thinking as a human, imperfect, and attainable activity. Hooks argued transformation ‘cannot happen if (teachers) refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks (1994). It is this transformative process, modeled through teacher vulnerability, that can be shared with students (Dryburgh, 2018, p. 96). By acknowledging one’s own vulnerability in the act and art of teaching, teachers can increasingly sustain a climate and community of trust in the dance classroom.

Dryburgh (2018) created a research study highlighting a small group of conservatory young adults, and this research shows that transformative and care frameworks can impact a dance classroom community positively. “Active participation in learning by the student, demonstration of the value teachers place in the student, and stimulating learning environments among peers” were discussed, with individual student experiences serving as data (Dryburgh, 2018, p. 96). The quality of student to teacher relationships and student to student relationships were emphasized as Dryburgh’s main takeaways in their research on engaged pedagogy, transformation, and care.

This perspective shifts the quantitative nature of measuring and stating dance learning standards to a discourse addressing how the dance learning environment in and of itself can facilitate student learning and transformation. This article used the term “location of possibility” coined by bell hooks in conjunction with Noddings’ theories on care ethics to state that the way teachers show up and facilitate classroom space impacts teacher and student relationships; teachers can model humanness and vulnerability in the classroom by caring for others and allowing themselves to be cared for (Dryburgh, 2018, p.96). The authors stated that a key takeaway in their research was how increased relationships yielded a better learning environment. More trust is present, which facilitates more holistic student learning.

This resource is highlighted in the dance standards section in this capstone to provide an additional viewpoint on what can be considered *standard* in the dance classroom. While it was different from other dance resources in that it does not organize and outline a sequence and scope in creating a dance curriculum, it brought forward important frameworks that promote equity and inclusion in dance, and additionally brought in voices outside the dance world to relate to dance learning. This source also echoed multiple voices from the culturally responsive teaching section that emphasized building relationships as foundational in a culturally responsive classroom.

Although this small research study took place in a conservatory with adult dance students in much smaller environments than K-12 teachers’ experience, these frameworks bring forth additional classroom dynamics dance teachers should seek to create in their lessons and curriculum (Dryburgh 2018). Chapter Three of this capstone utilizes the frameworks in this article to shape the curriculum and assessment resource for dance teachers; applying this framework to dance standards in conjunction with more traditional frameworks for dance standards continues to contextualize the inquiry of this capstone, *how can the Minnesota K-12*

Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?

Curriculum in Dance Pedagogy

The next part of the *dance pedagogy* section examines dance curricula in varied settings, including a curriculum designed for diverse students outside of the United States, a movement education curriculum for young learners, and a curriculum grounded in bringing African pedagogy into the higher education classroom. The exploration of curriculum in this section helps build further context in understanding the inquiry of this capstone, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush: Problematizing “Progress” in Ontario’s Elementary Dance Curriculum is an article published by Francis and Lathrop 2014. This article argued that dance as a performing art form and a physical activity does not easily fit within the context of the typical school subject and persists in being a topic of debate. This research explored the evolution of elementary school dance curricula in the province of Ontario Canada from 1900 to 2000, addressing three periods of curriculum reform.

First, there was an emphasis on physical training for the purpose of physical skill discipline and fitness from the 1900s through 1950s. Next, an emphasis on movement education intended to promote individuality, creativity, and physical literacy 1950s through 1980s. Finally, there was a return to dance as exercise for the purpose of cardiovascular health and fitness from 1980s through 2000s. The authors argued that contemporary scholars should promote meaningful dance content in the context of cultural understanding and respect (Francis & Lathrop, 2014.)

This article argued that dance is like a chameleon depending on its location in an educational context. It may be housed within a fine arts department and focused on student self expression and creativity, or housed within a physical education program geared towards developing student movement competency, physical fitness, and health related fitness, such as balance and agility. They added that further challenges, including student assessment, having enough resources, social media influences, and elementary school dance curriculum expectations from outside forces, made sustaining an elementary dance curriculum easier said than done. They continued by highlighting their educational identities as authors: one is a physical education and teacher; the other is a physical education curriculum specialist. The purpose of the research was to discuss the evolution of elementary school dance curricula under Ontario school system mandates and the policies of societal values that shaped them (Francis & Lathrop, 2014).

This article elaborated on the three evolutionary stages of Ontario dance education schooling. Muscular Christianity, the dance movement taking place from 1900 to 1950, advocated for the adoption of physical training schools that included military drills and tactics, with gymnastics for boys and calisthenics for girls. This time period was known for using children's rhymes and requiring children sing the elementary songs while practicing the physical drills. The curriculum additionally advocated that the teacher set dances and provide practice for the mundane natural movements of running, walking, hopping, and skipping to familiar melodies in nursery rhyme tunes. The dance curriculum was made up of singing games and folk dances that were learned in class and practiced outside. It had a large emphasis on unity and school spirit and reflected loyalty to the British Empire (Francis & Lathrop, 2014).

The next phase was called the Movement Education phase, taking place from 1950-1980. The value of creativity in education became more favored than rote memory and imitation as

common educational practice. Creative dance became more appealing to teachers who embraced a more inclusive and gender neutral approach. Rudolf Laban's work in contemporary movement analysis, in conjunction with his ideas that dancing should originate internally rather than externally contributed to the shift in dance education values as well. The teacher's role shifted to that of a leader whose intention in class was to help students discover their self expression. Students were encouraged to observe one another to develop their skills of collaboration, analysis, critique, and sequence creation. Students began utilizing Laban's efforts of time, space, and flow. Rudolph Laban's later research in movement theory included terms such as effort, space, body awareness, and relationships; around the 60s and 70s this curriculum's emphasis on creative self expression and free play was popular, however, sometimes described as not really dance, critics implied that this creative dance was counter productive to the development of specialized skills and complex sports techniques (Francis & Lathrop, 2014.)

The next movement in Canadian dance was the Health and Fitness movement taking place from 1980-2000. Around this time, the fitness level of Canadians arose as a national concern. This was also a time of relative prosperity in the education research field, and so a significant resource was published. The Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, as well as contributors in the national dance community wrote and published a handbook for generalist teachers, entitled *Basic Skills in Creative Dance*. There was an emphasis on healthy living in this curriculum with three strands of standards articulated to frame this holistic philosophy: Healthy living, fundamental movement skills, and active participation.

Active participation emphasized cardiovascular activity such as skipping and aerobics, and fundamental movement referred to physical skills like locomotion, manipulation, and stability, with an overall goal to cater to a wide variety of teaching expertise. Laban's movement

framework did not keep his former position as a foundational construct. The result of the values shifting in this time period marginalized dance, causing it to lose its societal value in elementary school curricula. (Francis & Lathrop, 2014).

The authors concluded that the dance curriculum has been significantly reduced in goals of importance, but still holds value, especially in today's age of childhood obesity. The article highlights the important fact that simple singing games such as *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, which was used for the moral development of British prisoners as they exercise around the mulberry bush, were a simple way for students to move together. They state now that many teachers "have students copy simplistic and popular, YouTube video urban dances" (Francis & Lathrop, 2014, p. 33).

The author stated that both old and new dance forms have been performed by marginalized people, but appropriated by more powerful others. They suggested teachers should no longer focus on skill acquisition, content, or providing experiences for students, but rather suggested that educators retain the child-centered, focused, and constructivist pedagogical practices of the past to create relevant and meaningful dance content for our students. (Francis & Lathrop, 2014)

This source is significant in this capstone because it highlights the timeline that informs how dance has come to hold value in an international school system. While this article painted an idealist view of how dance curriculum has been practiced and gives dance teachers with somatic backgrounds hope that dance education can be a meaningful, holistic, and bright movement, one must note that the social and historical context that made this dance education movement possible is different from what was happening in the USA at the time. This leaves readers to

continue to inquire what kind of curriculum and assessment practices are culturally and historically applicable to this current time and space.

One key takeaway from this article is that it valued the muscular Christianity movement as an idealistic and simple time in terms of dance existing in schools. During the muscular Christianity movement of schooling in Ontario, dance was not standardized as it has become in the United States now, and thus had a different meaning and function at the time. It argued that educators “retain the child-centered, focused, and constructivist pedagogical practices of the past to create relevant and meaningful dance content for our students” (Francis & Lathrop, 2014, p. 33). Many educators may agree with the student-centered sentiment in this article, but with this article also putting down urban dances on youtube as being simple and additionally idealizing a song that was sung by British prisoners, it makes one question the intention and impact of simply returning to practices of the past. In order for educators to be inclusive and equitable in their assessment practices and in the dance classroom overall, returning to simple, no frills rhythms and dances in dance class may only be a starting point; without cultural and historical contextualization, curriculum transformation may result in benefiting the interests of a school or community as a whole without fostering individual student identity and artistic expression.

This article’s key feature in combining rhythm and dance can be seen in multiple dance pedagogy articles; Chapter Three of this capstone highlights how music and dance can interplay in a lesson, as part of a dance curriculum and assessment resource for dance teachers.

So we can dance! Towards a new inclusive Australian dance curriculum- power, contestation, and settlements is an article by Meiners published in 2014. This article highlighted that in the neo liberal context of the globalized idea of a dance curriculum, dance as a learning experience in schools is usually located at the bottom of a deeply entrenched curriculum

hierarchy. The article provided insight into why this is happening, contributing to overall arts curriculum development research.

The author began the article by sharing aspects of a personal and professional journey with dance education and states the research question, *what factors impact the construction and realization of an inclusive dance curriculum for our primary school students in Australia?* Social justice was a key concept in this article, in conjunction with an agenda for change. This article characterized this agenda for change as a bid to embed aspirations for social justice in dance curriculum, communicating that others' agendas and interests in the education sector have shaped the curriculum and funding over the years (Meiners, 2014).

This resource highlighted that the political climate has caused an overvalue in structuring curriculum and audit culture, using terms such as competencies, outcomes, and indicators to measure student achievements. Tensions in dance education arose as dance in the public sector continued to be informed according to traditional values within Australian society, with less attention given to the individual students for whom the curriculum is being designed (Meiners, 2014).

The next section of *So we can dance!* introduced critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a way to analyze dance curriculum as a text, and more specifically to analyze power within a written text. The authors suggested that in order to further define what will students do, or what should students be able to do, curriculum creators should identify core content, maintaining each arts subject's integrity, to provide a shape for core sequential development throughout school years. This would provide an arts framework for both specialist and generalist teachers (Meiners, 2014). (In this article, generalist teachers refer to what we might label as general education teachers.)

The authors then went on to discuss how a futures-oriented lens is conveyed by the use of the word *will* as an auxiliary verb throughout the text. For example, there is a count of 42 times throughout their evaluation where the phrase *students will be able to develop/ lead/ gain, etc.* appears in relation to dance learning. The authors pointed out that by using *will*, it suggests necessity rather than possibility (may). The authors concluded with the take away that deciding and mandating what students should be able to know or do when it comes to dance education is challenging because the stakeholders involved in policy making have conflicting ideologies and interests. Due to this, it advocated that teachers become agents of curriculum design (Meiners, 2014).

This article presented a strong counterpoint when it comes to critically analyzing dance curricula, highlighting where stakeholders' relationship to power and policymaking may impact what is deemed important for dance students to learn in a classroom setting. This article additionally used the word *will* as an auxiliary verb, connecting back to *generalizations* from *Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction* and *benchmarks* from the *MN K-12 Dance Standards, 2018*. It emphasized that using the verb *will* in conjunction with mandating what students should be learning, suggests necessity instead of possibility (Meiners, 2014).

Due to these political factors at play, the author encouraged dance teachers to become agents of curriculum design. While this does not solve the issue of helping dance educators have access to an equitable and inclusive dance curriculum in the first place, it does shed light on who frames success politically, and who frames success in the dance classroom. This lens of framing success based on teacher experience and relationships with their students, rather than framing success by standards written by policymakers outside of the classroom, is taken into

consideration in Chapter Three of this capstone, where a dance teacher curriculum and assessment resource is expanded upon.

Decolonizing Dance Pedagogy: Application of Pedagogies of Ugandan Traditional Dances in Formal Education by Mabingo is an article published online in the journal of dance education in 2015 which stated that dances from African communities are gradually getting incorporated into formal education in the United States. This article located the place of African dancing within the existing body of literature, with emphasis on the scholarly, pedagogic, and research challenges of integrating these dances into formal education. The author built on their orientation as a learner and teacher of dance in academic and non-academic settings in Uganda, the US, and New Zealand. They explored how they have integrated their teaching experience and applied pedagogies of Ugandan traditional dances, such as music as a teaching strategy accompanied with dance, ethnic dance terminologies, children's games as warm up exercises, and storytelling as modalities of dance instruction in formal education. This author particularly emphasized how spiral curriculum and experiential learning have informed their dance teaching process and philosophy (Mabingo, 2015).

The author highlighted that when applying Ugandan-derived teaching practices to the learning experience, it went from a focus on product over process, to viewing and engaging fellow students as a community of learners to more individually driven thinkers on personal development journeys dedicated to honing in their academic and artistic achievements. The author stated that the possibilities to commune with learners to engage in relational learning, knowledge, co-creation, and interactions support characteristics typical to the learning processes of ethnic dances, but can be diminished by the competitiveness that Western instructional methodologies cultivate among students (Mabingo, 2015).

In the next section, the author covered two educational theories: spiral curriculum and experiential learning, and connected them to theories and practices of Ugandan dances, articulating their core conceptual foundations. The author articulated that dances from Ugandan communities have repetitive movements that make recurring patterns of performance and practice. The author connected this to Jerome Bruner's spiral curriculum, which emphasizes that once ideas or operations are introduced they can be understood, then revisited and reconstructed on a deeper level than the original understanding, coming into new layers of knowledge each time one spiral through the curriculum (Mabingo, 2015).

The author additionally stated that Ghanan communities are anchored in what they call communal apprenticeship, which is an educational philosophy that supports the practice expressed in the phrase, *learn as you do, and do as you learn*. The author related this to dance classes they have taught, exemplifying that by using a framework informed by Ugandan teaching and learning practices, they create opportunities for students to collectively participate; knowledge of dances in African communities is acquired directly in the community by actively participating in dance and music experiences (Mabingo, 2015).

The next section in this text went on to highlight applied Ugandan dance pedagogy in informal dance classes. After exemplifying several applications of Ugandan dance in formal education settings, the author concluded that teachers tend to bring their history into their teaching pedagogies and philosophies. The author then stated that implementing culturally responsive strategies for teaching Ugandan dances creates possibilities for the increased connection between student and teacher; students and each other; and students and the dances and learning environment they are participating in (Mabingo, 2015).

The author further articulated that their teaching philosophy aims to examine pedagogy as a site where their history with Ugandan dance form can be pursued further within a global dance context. They called on other teachers of nonwestern dance forms to engage in authentic research about the dances and cultures they come from; further understanding their ancestral contexts to help better develop and implement culturally inclusive pedagogy and curriculum in the dance teaching and learning process (Mabingo, 2015).

This article was included in the dance curriculum section of this capstone because it exemplified how a dance educator can use their background cultural knowledge to inform their curriculum and pedagogy in the dance space, leading to increased connections and relationships in the dance classroom. It additionally noted the curricular framework of Spiral Learning, previously discussed *Teaching Dance as Art in Education*, as a meaningful way to engage in dance learning. The capstone project featured in Chapter Three highlights two teacher resources: a lesson self-assessment and a curriculum self-assessment. Principles from this article, specifically including one's cultural background as an educator, were utilized in the dance teacher curriculum and assessment resource featured in Chapter Three in response to this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

The Importance of "Downtime" for Democratic Dance Pedagogy: Insights from a Dance Program serving Asian American Youth, published in 2017, is an article by local dance educators Betsy Maloney Leaf and Bic Ngo. This article examined how youth participants in a community based dance program developed a strong sense of purpose and commitment by leading their peers during informal, unstructured class time. The authors advocated that this is important

information for educational policymakers and stakeholders to know if they aim to foster leadership opportunities for young dancers as part of a wider commitment to social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, or democratic teaching.

This article explored how young dancers interacted with ideas of power, purpose, and sense of belonging in the community, contributing to literature on leadership, community building, and identity in youth dance settings. It was included in this literature review because of its unique take on highlighting student strengths in unstructured vs. structured times of class, and because the source was written by people local to Minneapolis whose research is applicable to a similar geographical location (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

This article began by acknowledging how dance education research has brought significant attention to the process of learning dance but less attention to what students are doing in the dance classroom outside of learning concepts and choreography. The authors used an example of an unstructured moment of three students fixing the chopsticks in their hair as a moment of impact in the world of dance that does not necessarily relate to teaching dance, but is rooted in peer coaching and leadership. The authors argued that these student led unstructured moments contribute to a stronger sense of belonging, and supports basic tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The authors continued to dive into the area of study by highlighting several theoretical frameworks that would be informing their research practice. They highlighted bell hooks' idea that proposed teaching as occurring everywhere, including beyond the formal structures of a classroom. They invited educational stakeholders to consider how society identifies a teacher, and empowered people to think about how the community is structured, who participates in the community, and how community practice can ignite change (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

They additionally highlighted Lynn Fendler's notion that generic constructs of community do more harm than good, isolating people rather than creating a common identity and bringing people together. Then they shared their research process, using themes of relationships, belonging, and leadership to look for themes of democratic dance pedagogy. They also noted that their research is with Hmong immigrants, and highlight how different dimensions of their own identities are informing their research process. This included their experiences as white American, and Vietnamese American women committed to addressing social, cultural, and educational inequalities. They understood as researchers that their data collection and analysis may express bias from their choices and their interpretations (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The next section in their research study was titled *Help Each Other and Help Them Bond: building community through mutual support and commitment*. This study featured youth participants in the dance program they were facilitating, learning traditional and contemporary forms of Asian dance. The researchers started to look for collaborative skills that were arising during their learning process, as well as look for peer feedback, support, and mentoring that occurred during unstructured portions of the class. The researchers noted the less formal class time provided students with opportunities to help each other. Often, the students would work together in small groups without the help of the instructor, with each group member understanding the function of the small group work. The small group work in the context was used in class time to improve difficult aspects of the performance and performance accuracy. They additionally noted that in this process, the pre-performance activities, such as makeup and eyeshadow became almost ritualistic in the way it, “minimized performance jitters, and further connected the dancers to one another” (Leaf & Ngo, 2017, p. 68).

The authors highlighted that working together in small groups built a community and positively affected the social capacities of youth. In conjunction with this mention of collaborative learning being beneficial in the dance environment, they also referenced Johnson and Johnson's research on collaborative learning. They stated that student work during downtime provided a striking example of how successful students can be when committed to achieving success together (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

Despite the long hours the dancers spent dedicated to rehearsals and performances, the authors argued that the youth chose to do that because the dance environment gave them such a strong sense of purpose. Attending class, performing in shows in competitions, and auditioning for new ensembles each year gave students a framework to understand their own artistic potential as well as form a relationship between their dance identity and other parts of their lives (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The next section of this text stated dance programming at community-based organizations can build opportunities for youth participants to identify their leadership capacity and further develop their skills by working as part of a dancing ensemble. Students took opportunities to lead, pushing themselves to become better, and this helped to encourage students to work together more as an ensemble. This article additionally highlighted that student leadership built into personal connections and relational experiences contributes to their success as mentors (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

By leveraging their connections within the ensemble, older students nominated *good teachers* to support groups who need the most help, boosting student openness and receptivity to hear feedback. The more purpose students put into their work, the more they were driven by their desire to succeed as young dancers, their sense of purpose in the organization, and their

commitment to each other. The result was that young leaders in the dance organization continued to take on leadership responsibilities, despite the hard work (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The author concluded studying dance can be a multi-layered experience, especially when opportunities arise for dancers to provide and facilitate dance leadership skills within an ensemble. The researchers in this article invited dance educators to consider the importance of unstructured class time, emphasizing that their findings are particularly important to dance educators and policymakers who want to foster leadership opportunities among young dancers as part of a commitment to social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, or democratic teaching practices. The authors noted that further research is needed particularly with an emphasis in formalized K-12 settings, where different expectations from school administrators may affect educators' fear of not fitting a model of what a regular classroom should look like, in terms of free time and downtime in class (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

This resource was included in the *dance curriculum* section of this capstone because it invited educators to facilitate and vision what downtime looks like in a dance class, outside of learning choreography and concepts. Although this article featured higher education students and did not necessarily factor in the classroom management needed for K-12 students to work together successfully during unstructured classroom time, it invited dance teachers to broaden what they define success to be, and specifically how they frame opportunities for success during class downtime. This article highlighted how success was motivated by other students in unstructured time, decentering the teacher in the classroom environment, and allowing more space for students to grow into leaders.

This article additionally echoed bell hooks' idea which proposes teaching as occurring everywhere, making this resource a timely culturally relevant discourse on success, power, and

leadership in a dance classroom environment (Leaf & Ngo, 2017). In Chapter Three of this capstone, a dance teacher curriculum and assessment resource is featured; the capstone project utilized concepts of this article to help teachers assess their own lessons or curriculum to determine how downtime in dance class can be a time for intentional leadership and relationship building, contributing to the creation of an equitable and inclusive dance classroom culture.

Assessment in Dance Pedagogy

The final section of this literature review examines research and strategies related to *how* we assess and *what* we assess in dance. While state-mandated standards may inform what teachers should be teaching in dance class, it is clear that teacher identity and student identity also play a part in inclusive and equitable assessment. Educators can additionally see that somatic movement paradigms affirm previously stated pedagogical perspectives of taking care of the needs of the humans in the room using radical care, radical systems, and listening to one's body; notions that must also be factored into what one deems successful in the dance teaching and learning space.

With multiple factors that impact success being highlighted in this capstone, readers may ascertain that creating inclusive and equitable assessment is not just based on standards but also who one is and where one comes from. This section highlights assessment examples for student success grounded in culturally responsive and inclusive paradigms, further seeking to address the inquiry of this capstone: *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

One assessment resource took the form of a video, titled *Assessment for Learning: Dances with Boys* (2006). Published by *Teachers TV/UK Department of Education*, this source

highlighted a boys' academy in east London. The abstract framed for the viewer the context of the students' lives and backgrounds as students at a sports college working with a PE department, integrating video playback into many activities in the classroom. A dance specialist worked on a warm up with the small class of boys, who then reviewed their performance on the video and repeated the work. They commented on valuing the experience of noticing and correcting their work. Their dance specialist addressed the implications of peer dance assessment and the importance of preparing students beforehand for peer assessment. Following the warm up, they worked on a longer sequence inspired by the political ballet *Swan Song*. Using written self and peer assessment practices, they developed an understanding of their own movement as well as their critical skills as audience members.

This resource demonstrated a real time example of students using an assessment practice commonly found in sports—video playback. The dance specialist used their prior knowledge as athletes and utilized video playback as an assessment method, where students have the opportunity to review, analyze, and repeat their work. They also utilized this tool for peer assessment, both written and verbal, which allowed them to develop understandings as both dancers and audience members (Teachers TV/UK Department of Education, 2006). Chapter Three features a dance teacher curriculum and assessment resource, which includes a student assessment resource. This resource informed the formation of this capstone's project, specifically for student self assessment. By taking into account how the dancers at this East London boy's academy are assessing themselves and each other, further context is built to answer this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

An additional dance assessment resource featured in this capstone is titled, *A Guide to Movement Fundamentals: Liberating Practices for Dance Artists, Movement in Life and Art*, written by Jane Hawley and published in 2014. The *Movement Fundamentals curriculum* is a “fundamental moving paradigm training trains dancers as artists and empowering people to love and feel grateful for their bodies, as phrased by Hawley, creator of Movement Fundamentals (Hawley, 2014). This text was separated into three parts: The paired principles of *alignment and function, range and efficiency*, and *vocabulary and intention*. Secondly, it included ten tenets of practice which translate into what practitioners of the form should be able to do and create while using the Movement Fundamentals framework. Finally, it included a physical practice called *The 4 Phases Practice*, which was patterned after the infinity concept: layered within each phase is a whole (Hawley, 2014).

The 4 Phases Practice can be done anywhere, for any amount of time, and is an all abilities practice, adaptable for a solo, duet, or group. The questions integrated within the practice were designed to support focused, layered discovery and research. The 4 Phases Practice and documentation process can be adapted to suit individual needs of dance artists involved in the practice. The *4 Phases* questions are listed as follows:

Phase 1: Prepare. *How do you begin, what is important, what is needed?*

Documentation: Write, draw or scribe responses to questions in phase 1.

Phase 2: Move. *How are you moving, what do you like to do, what are you noticing?*

Documentation: Write, draw, or scribe responses to questions in phase 2.

Phase 3: Dance. *How are you dancing? What do you think about? What do you imagine?*

Documentation: Write, draw, or scribe responses to questions in phase 3.

Phase 4: Witness. *How are you watching, what do you look for, what do you see?*

Documentation: Write, draw, or scribe responses to questions in phase 4.

(Hawley, 2014, p.11).

While many assessment criteria in dance are based on technical form or representation, the *4 Phases practice* engages dancers in questions that they are evaluating and participating in. This documentation process allows all dance artists the opportunity to self reflect over a period of time. Since self-reflection can be a component of dance assessment, within this paradigm is an assessment tool that may be transposed into many dance classroom settings.

Hawley's *Movement Fundamentals Curriculum* invited audiences to consider what else may be fundamental to movement. With this process being body-based rather than form based, it provided participants with multiple entry points into being a dance maker or audience member. Hawley's *4 Phases Practice* resource is unique because it charges dancers to keep a running documentation of their internal experience as well as noting what they are witnessing or observing (Hawley, 2014). The practice of writing as assessment and self-noticing as assessment played a role in Chapter Three's dance teacher curriculum and assessment tool, where a student self assessment resource was designed based on the frameworks outlined in this chapter.

A final resource that belongs in this review of literature is *Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World* by McCarthy-Brown. Published in 2017, this modern text had several takeaways related to incorporating identity in a dance classroom setting. This text used culturally relevant frameworks to provide dance educators with tools to align teaching methods to the current reality of many types of dance teachers working with many types of students. This three-part book explored culturally relevant classrooms, culturally relevant teaching, and critical dance pedagogy, separated into chapters written by McCarthy Brown and other diverse dance educators.

The first part of *Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World* explored how to create a culturally relevant classroom. It started with defining Gloria Ladson Billings' words on culturally relevant teaching previously cited earlier in this section. The author opened by connecting race to their relationship with dance. As a self-identified black woman raised by a single white woman, she spoke on her experience in dance in a predominantly white classroom environment, and how the normative dance culture she participated in affirmed or devalued her feelings of self knowledge and self identity. She used these experiences in dance to explore culturally relevant teaching practices in dance. Several key takeaway tools from part one were: knowing students, adapting to students, decentering power, supporting student culture, and meeting needs (McCarthy-Brown, 2017).

Her experience exemplified two perspectives: that of the student, and that of a teacher. As a student, this story told the audience there was something that was missing from her dance education, preventing her from connecting what she knew from home to what she was learning in studio classes. As a teacher she later went on to utilize some of the European dance forms that she learned while growing up, connecting to a need for her to critically examine her pedagogy so she could integrate her multiple perspectives of dance knowledge and pedagogy for the sake of her students. She quickly recognized how damaging her teaching practices were in that they were "alienating and disrespectful to the embodied dance knowledge of students" (McCarthy-Brown, 2017, p.10). It was this need that inspired the text she wrote to equip dance educators with culturally relevant teaching strategies.

Part 2 was titled, *Culturally Relevant Teaching and Critical Dance Pedagogy for Classes Pertaining to the Dancing Body*. This topic was divided into three chapters: culturally relevant ballet; culture, music, and composition class; and critical dance pedagogy for repertory.

The culturally relevant ballet chapter acknowledged that ballet instructors in higher education dance departments were challenged by the task to provide students with historical and social context around the dance form, with teachers often separating the physical form from its social context and background (McCarthy-Brown, 2017).

Ballet dancers of color in the United States were highlighted, as well as black, Chinese, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Native American ballet companies started by diverse ballet dancers. McCarthy Brown (2017) emphasized that students can explore the dancers of color who have made significant historical contributions to the dance form. The author articulated that by highlighting and exploring diverse curriculums within mainstream dance forms in the dance classroom, it can create an opportunity for students to practice research and critical thinking skills (McCarthy-Brown, 2017).

The author concluded the culturally relevant ballet section by highlighting how we can ask students about their relationship with storytelling, note the cultural context therein and relate such stories to the classical stories in ballet. McCarthy Brown emphasized that “all cultures and all people have stories. If we listen to our students’ stories, we will gain an understanding of their culture and their hearts” (McCarthy-Brown, 2017, p. 73).

Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World (2017) was included in the dance curriculum section of this capstone to further exemplify how an author incorporates their identity and experience in dance into their dance classroom. This source restated several ideas found in culturally relevant teaching frameworks, including meeting student needs, building relationships, and using examples based on student knowledge to relate it to dance conceptual knowledge. Additionally, this author highlighted listening to student stories as essential in creating dance pedagogy for a diverse world. This author was included not only for their hands-on experience in

teaching diverse bodies while living in a diverse body, but also because they emphasized that critical dance pedagogy is essential because everybody experiences dance differently.

Summary

The literature review in chapter two collected and synthesized sources relating to the three topics of *educational pedagogy*, *culturally relevant pedagogy*, and *dance pedagogy*, exploring what authors and researchers are finding about *standards*, *curriculum*, and *assessments* in these three topics. In the educational pedagogy section, readers learned how *Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12* (Department of Education, 2010) came from a government mandated common core curriculum, and how that curriculum defines and assesses success. This was contrasted with *Cultivating Genius*, (Muhammad, 2020) where the notion of understanding students based on the cultural and historical identities came into play as a means of capturing their full potential for success. *Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction: How to Bring Content and Process Together* (Erickson & Lanning, 2014) highlighted two dimensional and three dimensional frameworks for learning, calling on teachers to practice concept-based pedagogy to yield toward deeper and more connected student learning with an ultimate goal to facilitate whole child learning. *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students: Strategies for Teaching and Assessment* (Barker & Grassi, 2010) was also included in the educational pedagogy section, contextualizing policies that have affected how culturally and linguistically diverse students learn in the United States education system. This text also asked teachers to carefully assess the achievement and behavior of diverse students by using culturally sensitive tools to capture a full picture of the student, and gave several models and examples for doing so.

The *culturally relevant pedagogy* section of the literature review gave readers examples

of how researchers name race in the classroom, and how many policies designed to help students have equitable experiences in school and show quantitative progress may result in more harm and isolation than belonging. Many of the sources in this section connected back to Gloria Ladson Billings' work on culturally responsive teaching, and emphasized how cultural competence not only applies to people of color in the United States but also white people, who live just as racialized as an experience but have different relationships to power. The *culturally relevant pedagogy* section asked readers to inquire about what or who sets the standard when it comes to culturally relevant teaching: noting that how teachers frame success directly impacts the student self perception. It asked teachers to develop cultural and historical context of their students in terms of assessing for success in the dance classroom. The *Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards*, published by the Illinois State Board of Education also exemplified an organized, standardized way to talk about cultural responsiveness in the classroom based on Gloria Ladson Billings' culturally relevant teaching framework. The *culturally relevant pedagogy* section continued to define what curriculum looks like from a dance perspective and detailed a culturally responsive curriculum inventory that may be applied to many teachers in many content areas. This section additionally synthesized an online, Hawaii-based learning program called Affect designed for teachers and parents, aimed at activating educators' focus on family engagement as central to teaching. The *culturally relevant pedagogy* section continued to discourse about how classroom systems are affected by state and local standards, and the inherent issue that comes with the standardization of learning; with the key takeaway being educators must adapt their curriculum and assessment practices as a part of making education inclusive and equitable.

The *dance pedagogy* section of this literature review started with an analysis of *Teaching*

Dance as Art in Education, which summarized the history and context behind K-12 dance education, and explained to readers how the standards and core ideas are organized. Next, the literature review broke down the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards which informed this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* Readers found that the Minnesota K-12 Dance standards were heavily influenced by the common core standards articulated in *Teaching Dance as Art in Education*. This section delved into the sister resource to the *Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards*, the *Minnesota Arts Standards Glossary*, and readers gained a better understanding of how dance education resources in Minnesota compare to national dance education resources. Several additional texts related to dance pedagogical practices were explored, highlighting other essential components of a dance classroom beyond the written 'dance standards'; these included bell hooks' idea of the classroom as a location of possibility and Noddings' beliefs on care ethics. Several viewpoints on somatic and diversified dance assessment were examined as well, with all of these factors supporting this capstone's inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Chapter three utilized the literature reviewed in this capstone to make a dance teacher curriculum assessment resource that has four components: 1) a standards based lesson planning template 2) teacher assessment resources 3) student assessment resources, and 4) Additional resources evaluation and informational resources.

CHAPTER THREE

Capstone Project

Throughout this capstone audiences have explored the question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* Chapter Two laid a foundation for current dance research in areas related to pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment. Chapter Two also highlighted culturally relevant pedagogy frameworks that have used research to shed light on specific issues facing dance students and dance programs, all working together to inform the reader of current dance pedagogy ideas that show what an urban dance educator may need in their classroom.

Chapter Three focuses on the project outline itself, using the capstone question and applying knowledge and frameworks discussed from the literature review in Chapter Two to the real world of dance education, creating a tangible resource dance educators can use. With a large disconnect between the public dance education world and the people making decisions to create these jobs within the larger district existing, this capstone addresses a need for curriculum and assessment tools for dance educators. This capstone operates within the belief that systems change starts equipping educators with as much support and resources are needed to support our students how they deserve to be supported.

Project Overview and Context

Setting and Student Demographics

This project aims to create an assessment practice and protocol for teachers of urban students, with a sample Minneapolis Public School serving to highlight the demographics of the students this project is aimed toward. For example, this school demographic would be about 500

students, with 70% of students receiving free and reduced lunch and 15% of students part of the special education program. Many communities are communities of color, with a second-grade classroom demographic sample of 2/26 students Native, 9/26 students white, 1/26 students Asian, and 14/26 students categorized as black. The curriculum and lesson plans in this project are geared specifically toward a second grade classroom.

Missing Components to the Demographic Data

The Minneapolis Public School system does not separate black immigrants from black refugees from black descendants of enslaved people, so the data point in this context would need to be determined more specifically. If a more lineage-based application of Blackness would be applied in this case, the data point would read 6 of the 14 aforementioned black students are of East African descent, while 8 of the 14 students are of other African diasporic descent. This data additionally does not account for students who are white but new to the country due to being refugees, and are classified as English language learners, nor does it account for mixed race students, whereupon careful examination of several students that can be read as culturally black may be identified in the system as white. Additionally, there are students who are identified as black who may be read as culturally white. This is important to note because as it stands, teachers are unable to make lessons for students based on data alone, and a knowledge of individual students and their backgrounds is needed.

Project Description

This project creates a dance curriculum and assessment resource that dance educators can use in the classroom. This resource seeks to promote equity and inclusion by incorporating sources from Chapter Two to make tangible teaching resources, articulated in Figure A.

The teacher resources are geared towards any K-12 classroom teacher, with one student resource specifically designed for a second grade class and the other applications in a K-12 setting.

1) Standards-Based Lesson planning template <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Example second grade lesson utilizing the template b) How to Write an Objective: Visual and Formula 	
2) Teacher Assessment Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Lesson plan</i> self-assessment b) <i>Curriculum</i> self-assessment 	3) Student Assessment Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Self-assessment sheet b) Assessment choice board
4) Additional Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Resource assessment sheet b) MN K- 12 Dance Standards 2018 c) MN Arts Standards Glossary 2018 	

Figure A

The Standards Based Lesson Planning template incorporates the *Minnesota State K-12 Dance Standards* to help teachers develop standards based goals and objectives, and includes a sample lesson plan for a second grade dance class. It also incorporates aspects of the 8 step lesson plan from *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* to utilize multiple knowledge bases. An additional part of the standards based lesson planning template section is How to Write an Objective: Visual and Formula. This resource utilizes language from the standards to create a graphic organizer teachers can use to easily create standards-targeted objectives and their accompanying assessments.

The Teacher Assessment Resources incorporate the Historically Responsive Literacy framework found in *Cultivating Genius* and the *Illinois Teaching and Leading Standards* to frame how educators can at their lesson plans and evaluate how culturally relevant teaching practices are applied, helping educators evaluate and transform both their curriculum and their lessons.

The Student Assessment Resource incorporates principals from Universal Design mentioned in *How do students experience inclusive assessment*, as well as assessment ideas from the *Movement Fundamentals curriculum* and the *Dances with Boys* video to create an inclusive and equitable student assessment resources based on the lesson planning template in this project. The Self-assessment sheet is the accompanying assessment for the sample second grade lesson, and the assessment choice board is an example teachers can use with a wide range of dance students.

Last in the capstone project is the Additional Resources section, providing educators who use the resources in this capstone a way to provide important feedback, as well as connecting dance educators to two already existing resources: the 2018 Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards, and the MN 2018 Arts Standards Glossary, providing a well rounded and practical toolkit for dance educators.

Project Narrative

This capstone project is a dance teacher assessment resource divided into four parts: Part one is a dance lesson planning template that encourages teachers to utilize the dance standards, framed by the 8-step lesson plan from *Teaching Dance as Art in Education*. Part one features an example second-grade lesson utilizing the template on the topic of ballet choreography and phrasing.

Part one additionally includes a visual model and resource that helps dance educators map out essential components to their lesson that make it effective, inclusive, and successful, also framed from the 8-step lesson plan from *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* as well as the MN Dance Standards 2018 content strands. Part one also includes a section titled How to Write an Objective: Visual and Formula, which is a formula educators can use to write dance objectives with accompanying objective assessments.

Part two of this capstone project features two teacher assessment resources. The first is a lesson plan teacher self-assessment resource taking two forms– the first page is a pre-lesson checklist with a four-level rubric, featuring five criteria teachers can evaluate in the areas of dance strands, dance processes, identity representation, intellect representation, and criticality. The second page is a post-lesson reflection sheet asking educators to respond with specific examples of where the five criteria of dance strands, dance processes, identity representation, intellect representation, and criticality showed up in their lessons.

The Historically Responsive Literacy framework featured in *Cultivating Genius* was utilized to make the criteria, as well as concepts from *Teaching Dance as Art in Education*, and the *Illinois Teaching and Leading Standards*. Also featured in the teacher assessment resource section is a curriculum teacher assessment resource. This resource asks teachers to write down the unit title and unit timeline and provides ten prompts in eight areas: *unit concepts*, *unit objectives*, *unit learning experiences*, *assessment content*, *curriculum content*, *self-awareness*, *students as co-creators*, and *family and community collaboration*. These areas of evaluation are derived from the *Illinois Teaching and Leading Standards* and teaching *Dance as Art in Education*, organized by prompting educators with specific inquiries related to their unit on the left side, and leaving space for educators to fill in and plan out their units on the right side.

In this project, curriculum is used interchangeably with dance units. This is because this resource can be applied to one unit of study at a time, with the compilation of any amount of units together considered curriculum in the educational dance world. For example, a curriculum could be one unit, two units, four units, or six units depending on the length of time a teacher is working with students and how frequently they see each other.

Part three of this dance assessment resource is two student assessment resources grouped together. The first is a self-assessment sheet designed for a second-grade lesson. Dance teachers need to be able to define the objective assessment and develop a mini rubric to utilize this assessment sheet. From there, the four criteria from the rubric are plugged into a sheet just for students, with corresponding visuals next to the rubric guidelines to account for many students in second grade who are still learning to read and write. This resource takes the previously created second-grade ballet lesson in this project and fills out the corresponding assessment, with students able to grade themselves with one, two, or three stars depending on how they evaluate the meeting of their goals. While the evaluation criteria are on the page, the teacher is also able to read it out loud and have students fill in their ratings in real time, accommodating many different students with a wide range of reading and writing capabilities. This resource is unique because it not only functions as a self-assessment tool but also serves as a peer evaluation tool.

The other half of the student assessment resources in part three is an assessment choice board modeled after Universal Learning Design, referenced in *How to Students Experience Inclusive Assessment* (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021). The choice board uses three entry points into learning assessment: *representation* (representing and showing your learning), *expression* (expressing or physicalizing your learning), and *engagement* (engaging with and thinking about your learning).

The assessment choice board visual model has three rows by three columns with nine choices in total that state the dance assessment choice and what students need to do to turn it in and receive credit.

The fourth and final part of this dance assessment resource is simply an additional resources section: a cumulation of resources that are helpful for dance educators to use in conjunction with parts one, two, and three of this project. First, the additional resources section provides readers with an assessment sheet meant to evaluate the effectiveness of any or all parts of the capstone project. The questions in this project assessment connect back to the inquiry of this capstone, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?* Dance educators using this assessment resource can then fill select *yes*, *maybe*, or *no* to each prompt and provide additional commentary. Next, the additional resources section in part four of the project link to previously published dance standards in the state of Minnesota (*MN K-12 Dance Standards 2018*). The intention behind including it directly with the resource is to help teachers understand that the standards are a key component of the puzzle in creating standards-based lesson plans and assessments— a resource that can be utilized and not just exist without understanding.

Intended Participants and Audience

This capstone is intended to be applied to many audiences; dance educators working in urban communities, dance educators working with children, theatre and music teachers looking for assessment models, or physical education teachers looking for ways to integrate more arts education based assessment practices.

Project Timeline and Legacy

The creation of the assessment resource for this capstone takes place over March 2023 with a final draft of the entire dance assessment resource available in April 2023.

The intention behind this project is to make a resource that can be applied to many dance educators in a wide variety of contexts, using a lens of culturally relevant teaching to ensure students taking dance classes are not only learning concepts and skills, but also growing in their identity and creative capabilities.

Assessment

It is important for this resource to be effective and practical for educators seeking to incorporate equitable and inclusive assessments for success into their dance teaching practice. To assess the effectiveness of this capstone project in answering the question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success*, the project will be shared with a group of dance educators with an ask an invitation to utilize and/or provide feedback on the resources. In addition to this being a relationship-based way to share dance knowledge and research with an immediate network of dance educators, this also invites additional feedback to make changes before presenting this work on a larger scale. The group of dance educators will be provided with a scorecard (Figure B) asking them to score on the following areas of effectiveness:

	1- No	2- Maybe	3-Yes	Comments
1. This resource uses research based frameworks and standards				
2. This resource provides educators with a way to equitably and inclusively evaluate student success				
3. This resource helps educators assess their lessons with a lens of equity and inclusion				
4. This resource helps dance educators assess their curriculum with a lens of equity and inclusion				

Figure B

Conclusion

The goal of this capstone is to explore what a standards-based dance lesson and assessment rubric that yields equitable and inclusive measures for success could look like. By using the 2018 K-12 Minnesota Dance Standards to inform *student will be able to do* structures, also known as benchmarks or generalizations, in conjunction with critical dance pedagogical concepts to fill in any gaps to make the tools in this project more inclusive and equitable, this capstone develops an applicable resource that seeks to support the answer to this research inquiry: *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Once finished, this work can be presented to an authentic audience like another Dance Summit facilitated by Mary Harding, a professional development for dance educators, or at the National Dance Education Organization conference which happens every fall.

However this resource is used, this capstone adds to the growing body of dance education research and transforms the way dance educators assess success in the dance classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR

I was first introduced to the MN 2018 K-12 Theatre and Dance Standards at the beginning of my career in Minneapolis Public Schools on an arts specialist professional development day. They had been recently revised and were presented in a way that made me respect and value the intention and framework. I felt excited to utilize them, but as a new teacher, I was getting a wide variety of input to synthesize. I was continuously building on what I knew in terms of building classroom routines and rituals, structuring inclusive dance classes, planning lessons, and building relationships. As much as I loved the process of developing my own dance teacher practice and seeing positive outcomes, I had very little opportunity to share or develop my findings with any dance peers in my district. Without the components of peer feedback and peer reflection paired with a common language around assessment and standards, I felt limited in how much I could grow and offer as a dance educator working with diverse students.

This capstone comes from a dance teacher educator in a public school setting, often required to go to many professional developments and take extra courses related to classroom management, culturally relevant teaching, or social-emotional learning; busy, hardworking, motivated, and wanting to make a change in the way teachers think about success in the dance classroom. This resource is also inspired by my own experiences growing up as a black girl who danced. I described a phenomenon of little black girl dancers like myself, and many other girls many girls in black and brown bodies living in communities where they are outside the norm of beauty or success, feeling less successful in the skin they are in within the dance classroom setting. With these challenges and experiences in mind, I developed the capstone question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

By exploring how dance educators can create equitable and inclusive assessments, it is my hope to contribute to the ever-growing body of dance education research and transform the way dance classrooms frame and assess success; helping teachers dismantle systems of oppression that happen in every fabric of culture including in the dance world, and helping little black girls as well as all students feel more confident and supported in the dance classroom.

As a dancer, then dance teacher, and now dance writer I have learned that the most impactful resources for me have been those that have practicable and applicable skills to take directly into the classroom, leaving me with the capacity to be more creatively present and less cerebrally challenged or reactive. The most impactful resources are the ones that challenge me to develop routines and rituals that are inclusive and equitable, all while supporting me with knowledge that connects to a broader community of dance educators. This capstone seeks to create a resource that I needed earlier in my career, and in chapter four of this capstone, readers will become informed of my experiences of executing this capstone project. In this chapter, I will provide a summary of chapter two to refresh readers on the literature review in this capstone. , Next, I will share the most critical learnings for me as a dance educator, then highlight significant sources from the literature review in chapter two of this capstone that played a key role in creating the project. Any project implications and next steps will then be discussed. To conclude, I will share with readers my critical reflection on the process and how it has (or will) impact my work as a scholar and a teacher, and impact the profession as a whole.

Summary

The literature review in chapter two compiled and discourse on sources related to the research question of this capstone, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018)*

lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?

The first section of the literature review explored three parts of educational pedagogy: educational standards, educational curriculum, and educational assessments. The literature started with laying down general education frameworks that apply to K-12 teachers in core content areas such as math and reading to provide readers with a context of how content areas outside of theatre and dance are approaching standards, curriculum, and assessment.

To begin, this chapter explored the Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12 (Department of Education, 2010). This resource highlighted how the common core state standards for English language arts and literacy are the accumulation of an extended effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K-12 standards, setting the framework to ensure that all students are college and career ready for literacy no later than the end of high school. The standards derive from international models and include research and input from new resources, schools, professional organizations, educators, and educational stakeholders, with the English language arts standards arising from the need to define college and career readiness and what it means to be a literate person in the 21st century. This resource was included in this capstone not only because it is an accessible and comparable research based framework, but also because it highlights how an accessible research based framework adds more cohesiveness and credibility to the field, helping educators and other educational stakeholders value the content area (Department of Education, 2010).

This chapter additionally explored *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*, 2020, by Gholdy Muhammad.

This literacy resource set a standard on what educators should be able to know or do when it comes to teaching literacy from a culturally responsive perspective. *Cultivating Genius* was featured in the standards section of this capstone to emphasize the value of grounding standards from a lens and framework of equity, in addition to defining what students should be able to do as the previous source has. The introduction to this book highlighted the value of literacy for black people in America. Throughout the book, Muhammad (2020) shared the ways in which literacy was defined historically and outlined a four-layered equity framework reimagining the standards set for teaching and learning: *identity development*, *skill development*, *intellectual development*, and *criticality*. Tenets of these standards are included in the teacher self assessment resource in this capstone project and played a large role in providing language and organization of this resource.

Cultivating Genius additionally provided practices for implementing historically responsive texts and lesson plans. It framed student success from a perspective of abundance rather than deficit, and invited educators to apply the framework to their curriculum and lesson plans. It outlined a historical account of the importance of books and literature, and gives readers a lesson plan template and additional sample lessons that are inclusive of the four layered Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) framework, also utilized in this capstone project.

The next part of the literature review built on readers' knowledge of standards in educational pedagogy to introduce them to curriculum in educational pedagogy. One source featured in the literature review that tied much of this learning together was *Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction: How to Bring Content and Process Together*, by H. Lynn Erickson and Lois A. Lanning, 2014. A main component of this text that was applied in this capstone project was how the authors took ideas from the national common core standards

and organized student objectives called *concepts* and *generalizations*. *Generalizations* are present to summarize the important understanding students will realize by the end of the unit of study. A typical curriculum unit will have 5 to 8 *generalizations*, depending on the grade level and length of the unit. These ideas informed the objective writing and unit planning resources in this capstone project, providing readers with an understanding of why education utilizes these types of terms to describe student learning, as well as an understanding of where these concepts come from. To summarize, this chapter informed teachers of what they need to understand, and why they need to understand content based curriculum and instruction. The authors highlighted the road ahead and brought forth the important fact that instruction does not end with factual knowledge, but accumulates in deeper conceptual understandings. It is the belief of the authors that concept based curriculum and instruction are there to help educate the whole child. Additionally, the authors stated education is at an exciting crossroads with the United States common core standards, similar to how this capstone highlights how the Minnesota K-12 Theatre and Dance standards puts dance educators in a unique and exciting situation. (Erickson & Lanning, 2014).

After highlighting to readers a context of how general education pedagogy interacts with standards and curriculum, this capstone went on to discuss general education assessment strategies and frameworks that support this capstone's inquiry into *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

In this section, the text *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students: Strategies for Teaching and Assessment*, by Elizabeth A. Grassi and Heidi Bulmahn Barker, 2010, was explored for its lenses in equity and inclusion as well as its assessment frameworks

and resources. The authors stated that the text is for teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, serving as a resource for teachers who need to build knowledge of the behaviors of students who are acquiring late English as a second language; which may look similar to the behaviors of students who are learning, disabled, or has speech or language impairments, but the core issues that determine these behaviors are different.

This literature review discussed the chapter in this text that focused most specifically on strategies for the assessment process. Chapter five of *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Exceptional Students: Strategies for Teaching and Assessment* overviewed three key points that the authors want educators to take away:

- 1) Why existing evaluation systems may not serve the needs of culturally and linguistically, diverse, exceptional students.
- 2) How current policy classifies children for special education in English learning programs.
- 3) What teachers can do to meet the needs of CLDE students. (Barker & Grassi, 2010, p. 109)

This chapter provided specific detail about how assessment in special education works. They also defined how they use the term assessment: it refers to the process of ascertaining the child's learning status. This means assessment in the context of the book and the educational world it is describing, is completely linked to systemically ascertaining a child's learning status based on teacher instructional strategies and teacher interventions.

A significant factor this resource stated impacts assessment is the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandates that US states demonstrate that all students must reach proficient levels on the state's language arts and mathematics assessments. This includes English language learners,

who also must meet the same academic progress goals as other students. States must demonstrate yearly progress. While assessing students on language, reading, and writing skills in English each year to determine students' progress in learning English may help the state meet its quota, these proficiency tests do not give teachers a complete picture of students' language proficiency. The author noted that assessments used to measure English proficiency can have issues that result in students receiving less than proficient scores, which does not reflect their actual level of success (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

Finally, this chapter highlighted how essential it is that evaluators of students receiving assessments be familiar with the culture of the student, and understand the stages of cultural acquisition. If assessment tools used exhibit cultural or linguistic bias, the information gathered from these tests may be inaccurate and lead to labeling a child with a learning disability that may not necessarily be present (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

This resource informed educators of the laws and policies that affect culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and how the system of education mandates educators to meet the needs of these students. It also showed examples of what assessment looks like outside of the bubble of qualitative data and highlighted what culturally and linguistically diverse students need to be successful. It sets a standard for teachers in terms of what assessment looks like systemically for a specific group of students and discusses what public school teachers can expect in the instructional/assessment cycle, providing a well rounded context about what assessment can look like in schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse students (Barker & Grassi, 2010).

Next, the literature review moves from educational pedagogy to culturally responsive pedagogy, highlighting culturally relevant pedagogical frameworks and sources to inquire *how*

can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success? This section is similarly organized to section one, exploring three foundations that make up *culturally relevant pedagogy (standards, curriculum, and assessment)* and how they may model and frame how we create equitable and inclusive assessments for success in the dance environment.

The first resource explored in this section was *Disciplining Dalmar: a demand to uncover racism and racialization in pursuit of culturally relevant pedagogy* by Mason published in 2013. It exemplified a specific student's experiences being a Somali immigrant and how the educational system they are a part of while aiming to live out an equity focused agenda, still disciplines students in a way that creates an achievement gap. This article aimed to use aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy to decrease the gap in standardized test scores between students of color and white students. The author argued that seeing oneself racially is a precursor to understanding how one moves about racialized situations. They highlighted Ladson-Billings' train of thought that emphasizes that cultural competence applies to white people— both teachers and students— as much as it does to people of color, which challenges white people to recognize how their language, attitudes, and behaviors coincide with the dominant culture while also committing to learning about other non-dominant cultures.

The author of this paper emphasizes one may frame identity development, or the child's perception of self, as multidimensional; acknowledging many cultural factors that makeup one's perception of self. This is important to know as educators because the environment acts on the student who acts back on themselves and the environment— meaning if a student is learning in an environment they perceive at some point to be racist, they will reflect that racism on themselves and back into the environment (Mason, 2013). This article starts the *culturally relevant pedagogy*

section of this capstone with an example of how a student who is not experiencing an equitable and inclusive classroom environment feels, and how their self image and identity within the larger context of their schooling environment affects their perception and achievement of success in the classroom. The author proposes Gloria Ladson Billings's idea that cultural competency applies to all people in the educational environment, and that every person is seen racially; they themselves may see it or live it every day, or don't want to see it. This call to people in power—educators—to become culturally competent to better help facilitate the feeling of achievement and success in students outside the dominant culture in America (Mason, 2013). This key idea of promoting cultural competency amongst educators in an effort to see and name race in the classroom is incorporated in this capstone project's teacher assessment resources.

Starting out the standards in culturally relevant pedagogy section is an article titled, *From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools*; a speech that took place during the 2006 Presidential Address given by Gloria Ladson Billings. This article highlights Gloria Ladson Billings's 2006 presidential address as essential to their own work as an educator.

This text began by setting the tone and defining and contextualizing the term *achievement gap*. It refers to “disparities in the standardized test scores between black and white, Latino and white, and recent immigrants and white students” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 2). The article suggested that focusing on the gap is misplaced; rephrasing the term as *education debt* that is owed to students that have accumulated over time. The education debt combines historical, economic, social, political, and moral components, with the underlying agreement that factors like race and class continue to be strong predictors of achievement, while gender disparities have shrunk.

This text was included in the standard section of this capstone because it highlights a standard way or framework to look at student achievement and success, empowering educators to consider how we are framing success with awareness of our students' cultural and historical context. The author of this text wants readers to take away the main idea that teachers must play a role in zeroing the educational debt owed to students so they are able to experience equitable and inclusive achievement, and that one way we can do that is by reframing the vocabulary we are using to define student success (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

An additional resource that uses a less theoretical and more applicable framework is *Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching*, Geneva Gay, 2001. This text also highlights a framework in which educators can use to build their foundation on culturally responsive teaching upon. This resource sets an applicable and timely standard for how educators should be approaching culturally relevant teaching and learning in their classrooms. While this source does not use language educators may typically associate with standards such as anchors and benchmarks, it encapsulates and intersects with much of Gloria Ladson Billings' work highlighted in several sources in this capstone, and organizes it in a way that educators may apply to their own practice. It particularly reemphasizes the notion that all teachers have a race, and similarly how all people have culture (Gay, 2001).

An additional source that standardizes information on culturally responsive teaching is the *Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards*, published by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2022. It is featured in this capstone because it is an organized resource that features actionable items and values from researched based sources, designed specially as a resource for culturally responsive teachers and leaders. This resource not only echoed tenants found in Gloria Ladson Billings' culturally relevant teaching framework, but also left teachers

and leaders utilizing it with an organized guide to understanding and applying culturally responsive teaching in their practice. This resource informed the dance educator assessment resource capstone project by providing a model in which to frame culturally responsive teaching values and practices to dance educators.

Next, the culturally responsive pedagogy section focused on culturally responsive curriculum, highlighting two related resources: first was a curriculum evaluation resource designed by New York City parents, students, educators, and institutions, outlining a step-by-step process to complete a curriculum scorecard; the scorecard uses many research based practices to provide quantitative tracking and scoring on how culturally relevant practices are showing up in the classroom (New York University, 2023).

The other resource in the culturally relevant teaching section of chapter two's literature review is titled *Culturally Responsive Classroom Ideas*, published by a Hawaii based education organization called Affect. It featured a series of online lessons that respond to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds in need of students and families. Affect additionally highlighted culturally relevant frameworks specified for students with a specific cultural background, with a particular emphasis on parent communication. The website is organized by modules divided into lessons, with Hawaii teacher performance standards on the same webpage as the lesson overviews and examples, exemplifying a way that an educational organization can make information accessible to both parents and teachers, while connecting to state mandated standards that impact what teachers must do and understand to ensure a culturally relevant learning environment (Affect, 2023). The Affect web design model informed the dance educator assessment resources in this capstone, particularly drawing from its emphasis on additional factors and criteria beyond just assessment; making it a robust and interactive educator resource that can be applied to many

other educational resource formats.

Last in the culturally relevant pedagogy section is an exploration of culturally relevant assessment resources. An article that highlighted and critiqued the need for assessment and what we choose to assess is titled *Culturally, sensitive, relevant, responsive, and sustaining assessment. Are there limits to making large scale standardized testing culturally responsive?* (Evans, 2021). The author began by acknowledging that recent conversations in the educational measurement field have raised questions about if large-scale standardized tests can even be designed and implemented in ways that are more culturally, sensitive, relevant, responsive, or sustaining (Evans, 2021). The author continued by interrogating what *standardized* means, and inquiring about what purpose standardized tests serve. Evans (2021) emphasized that standardization is usually required when test scores are intended to be used for high stake purposes, just such as school accountability, and creating school budgets, continuing to state that what may be culturally relevant, responsive, or sustaining for one is not culturally relevant, responsive, or sustaining for all, creating a significant challenge ahead for large scale, standardized tests at the level of individualization needed.

The author concluded that classroom systems are obviously affected by state and content standards and accountability, but teachers can and do adapt their curriculum and assessment practices to their students. The author's use of terminology coined by Gloria Ladson Billings additionally frames for readers how the term culturally relevant teaching has evolved and can be used interchangeably with other terms to achieve the same effect. This text brought an important consideration forward and helps readers frame the political nature of standards in education in this capstone. This resource helped readers come to a common understanding of what

standardization means in the world of education, which in this capstone is applied to help construct a more inclusive understanding of what it means to standardize dance education.

Culturally relevant assessment was additionally explored in the literature review through the 2021 publication titled, *How do students experience inclusive assessment? A critical review of contemporary literature*, co-authored by Australian educators Tai & Ajjawi. This resource highlighted research seeking to examine inclusive classroom assessment designs. Their research was focused on a higher learning environment, with the researchers acknowledging how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can provide clear pathways for course design in higher education, however, students from diverse backgrounds still reported assessment as a significant challenge within higher education; with a large part being that assessment strategies do not account for and adapt to increasingly diverse student populations (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021).

With UDL principles providing multiple means of engagement, applied to assessment it means that assessment tasks should be achieved in a variety of ways and there should be options for students to demonstrate their capabilities. While this will particularly help students with learning or sensory disabilities, it is unlikely to fully account for broader student diversity.

A main takeaway from *How do students experience inclusive assessment? A critical review of contemporary literature* was specifically how students respond to inclusive assessment; the article stated that the linguistically diverse students felt increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, and reduced anxiety when opportunities for choice assessment arose. With choice assessment being a key feature in Universal Learning Design, educators can take this key feature and apply it to their own content areas to work towards equitable and inclusive assessment in the classroom (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021). The capstone project incorporates choices assessment from the Universal Learning Design model for learning, utilizing choice assessments in the curriculum and

assessment resource designed for dance educators. Culturally relevant teaching frameworks are then added to this model, cumulating in a student assessment resource featured in the capstone project.

Chapter two's literature review first explored educational pedagogy, then culturally relevant pedagogy. The next section focused on dance pedagogy, building on knowledge learned from previous sections, and organized into three sections: dance standards, dance curriculum, and dance assessment. *Teaching Dance as Art in Education*, a text published in 2006 by Brenda Pugh McCutchen, started off the chapter by highlighting a framework that has informed both the Minnesota Dance Standards 2018 and the National Core Standards for the Arts in Dance. This text sets a standard for all states to build a cohesive and in-depth dance program based on national guidelines. The textbook is divided into three parts with part one titled *exploring understanding dance as arts education*, part two titled *clarifying the content of K-12 educational dance*, and part three titled *presenting dance in arts education*. It also includes three appendices: Appendix A features a reference list of concepts, Appendix B features forms, checklists, sample items, and articles, and Appendix C includes professional organizations and national initiatives related to teaching dance in arts education. It additionally includes a glossary of terms and concludes with an about the author section (Pugh, 2006). Part one ends with chapter 5, *identifying four cornerstones of dance as art in education*, highlighting how the cornerstones lay the foundation for educator accountability. The text highlights the four educational dance cornerstones as follows:

Cornerstone 1: dancing and performing. (Performing)

Cornerstone 2: creating and composing (creating)

Cornerstone 3: knowing history, culture, and context (knowing about)

Cornerstone 4: analyzing and critiquing (responding) (Pugh, 2006, p. 102)

The author emphasized that when cornerstones are taught well, they individually and collectively ensure that dance education is comprehensive. They emphasized that students who experience all four cornerstones know and respond to dance through the choreographic works of others in themselves, and their own dancing bodies, showing that cornerstones can overlap to support each other. This source stated that the foundational disciplines in dance, or cornerstones, do not change every 8 to 10 years while the national standards may change. The author additionally highlighted that the cornerstones represent dance experiences from four artistic viewpoints: 1) dancer as dancer, 2) dancer as critic, 3) dancer as historian, and 4) dancer as choreographer. The author emphasized that all of these points of entry support dance students in understanding the dance experience from multiple perspectives. The author argues that to teach dance successfully, one must not only teach each cornerstone individually but also related one cornerstone to another. They continue to state that, while there may be reasons to isolate the cornerstones for instruction, cross-referencing and integrating them also helps students have *enduring understandings* (Pugh, 2006). The author additionally highlighted that the cornerstones are the basis for the curriculum, and standards are the basis for keeping the curriculum on track and measuring student achievement. They acknowledged that operating a class on standards alone would be one-sided and that students need goals and objectives so educators know where their class is going and how to get their students there. Standards only tell teachers what students have to know and be able to do, which is why authors advocate that dance teachers need both standards and cornerstones to write dance curricula (Pugh, 2006).

The author continued to state that using goals and objectives keeps dance educators focused on student outcomes, bringing dance education from the textual to the physical.

They highlighted that goals and content standards are the abstract vision, statement, or big picture. The author advocated for dance educators to utilize goals to “drive the boat”, and utilize objectives to “steer to where you’re going”, asking educators to write goals based on what they deem important for their students to know (Pugh, 2006, p. 117). They encouraged educators to take these goals and incorporate standards to ensure that they are going in the right direction. Then with specific grade levels, designing dance experiences and scaffolding them get students moving towards the goal by way of the objective. *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* is an in-depth resource for dance educators in a K-12 setting, framing where dance stands in an educational setting and highlighting a researched based scope and sequence for dance educators to utilize. It highlighted sequential learning and spiral curriculum as methods to create both broad and deep knowledge of dance. Its common core-inspired organization and language structure frames dance as a content area worthy of assisting general education learning, to help general education teachers see the value of dance. It uses similar ideas to this capstone’s previously mentioned use of *concepts* and *generalizations*, naming them as *goals* and *objectives*. This capstone project utilized this resource’s eight-step lesson plan to model the dance assessment and lesson planning resource due to its strong and relevant language in dance standards.

Also included in the dance standards section are two paired resources: the *MN K-12 Dance Standards (2018)* and the *Minnesota Department of Education Academic Standards in the Arts Glossary, 2018*. Both were revised and created by a team of dance teachers and leaders throughout the greater Twin Cities and lay a framework for what Minnesota students should be able to do in dance classrooms. Contrasting the *MN K-12 Dance Standards* with other sources in this chapter helps readers compare and contrast varied perspectives on standard models to further

inquire on this capstone’s area of inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

The glossary is a 25-page PDF resource that began by summarizing strand definitions for all arts areas. It highlights and describes four *foundations*, or “the underlying knowledge and skills which are the building blocks of working in each arts area.” Foundational knowledge and skills support student learning in the four artistic processes of Create, Perform/Present, Respond, and Connect. This source has vocabulary definitions of all the arts terms organized by content area, with dance terms listed on pages two through five. The terms on the glossary intersect with those terms found in the K-12 Minnesota Arts standards. This resource ends with an appendix that breaks down how to read each five-digit benchmark code that identifies the *arts area*, *grade*, *strand*, *anchor standard*, and *benchmark*. It highlights the background of the arts standards, stating that Minnesota is in the process of adopting the 2018 Academic Standards in the Arts by the 2021-2022 school year, with a review of arts standards occurring during the 2027-2028 school year. This source additionally cites the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (2014) and other state standards as resources that informed the making of the standard

The MN Dance Standards are organized by *strand*, *anchor standard*, and *benchmark*. These terms are defined in the *2018 Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts Glossary*. While the MN K-12 dance standards outline strands, anchor standards, and benchmarks for all grades, this capstone project focused on what students should be able to do in second grade. This resource is available to K-12 dance educators in the state of Minnesota and utilizes a similar structure highlighted in *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* to articulate how dance learning should be organized. It additionally addresses the contributions of Minnesota American Indian

tribes and communities which highlight cultural context specifically as a standard that dance teachers should incorporate (Perpich Center, 2018). In this capstone project, the dance standards are incorporated to create a curriculum and assessment resource aimed at helping teachers connect the dance standards to their own curriculum.

Location of Possibilities: Exploring Dance Technique Pedagogy Through Transformation and Care, published by Dryburgh in 2018, was an additional perspective explored in the literature review that teachers can reference as standard or expected in the dance learning environment. This article emphasized how learning through dance technique has the potential to transform students, in terms of what their bodies can do and their sense of self in the world.

While this article focuses on a small group university setting and is not representative of students who may be found in Minneapolis public schools, this article emphasized active participation, demonstration of care, and a stimulating dance classroom environment as parts of what make the dance classroom a place of transformation which can be applied to many settings (Dryburgh 2018). The term “location of possibility” was coined by bell hooks (1994, p. 90) to “describe the potential of the classroom to enable emancipatory change”, as stated in the article. Hooks is attributed to the theoretical perspective of engaged pedagogy (1994), while Noddings is attributed to care ethics (2013); both provide a framework that impacts the classroom environment. This article additionally highlights the idea that teachers should model vulnerability and self-care. Hooks (1994) further expanded on engaged pedagogy, asserting that teachers might only be effective in fostering transformation with students by being involved in an ongoing process of their own self-actualization. By acknowledging one’s own vulnerability in the act and art of teaching, the authors stated that teachers may increasingly sustain a climate and community of trust in the dance classroom. This perspective shifts the quantitative nature of

measuring and stating dance learning standards to a discourse addressing how the dance learning environment in and of itself can facilitate student learning and transformation. This resource was highlighted in the dance standards section in this capstone to provide an additional viewpoint on what can be considered *standard* in the dance classroom.

While it is different from other dance resources in that it does not organize and outline a sequence and scope in creating a dance curriculum, it brought forward important frameworks that promote equity and inclusion in dance, and additionally brings in voices outside the dance world to relate to dance learning. This source also echoed multiple voices from the culturally responsive teaching section that emphasize building relationships as foundational in a culturally responsive classroom. Applying this framework to dance standards in conjunction with more traditional frameworks for dance standards helped to create this capstone project seeking to answer the inquiry, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Next, the dance pedagogy section of this literature review discussed dance curriculum. It first explored an article titled, *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*. This source was significant because it highlighted the timeline that informs how dance has come to hold value in the Canadian school system. While this article painted an idealist view of how dance curriculum has been practiced and gives dance teachers with somatic backgrounds hope that dance education can be a meaningful, holistic, and bright movement, social and historical context that made this dance education movement possible is different from what was happening in the USA at the time. This left readers to continue to inquire about what kind of curriculum and assessment practices are culturally and historically applicable to this current time and space.

This article's key feature in combining rhythm and dance can be seen in multiple dance pedagogy articles; this capstone project capstone draws from the way music and dance can interplay in a lesson as part of the student assessment resource.

So we can dance! Towards a new inclusive Australian dance curriculum- power, contestation, and settlements is an article by Meiners published in 2014. This article highlighted that in the neo-liberal context of the globalized idea of a dance curriculum, dance as a learning experience in schools is usually located at the bottom of a deeply entrenched curriculum hierarchy. Despite being an additional article that exemplifies a dance program outside of the United States, this article highlights how systems and policies affect what adults outside of the dance classroom expect dance students to know or be able to do.

This resource highlighted that the political climate had caused an overvalue in structuring curriculum and audit culture, using terms such as competencies, outcomes, and indicators to measure student achievements. The authors stated that tensions in dance education continued as dance in the public sector was informed according to traditional values within Australian society, with less attention given to the individual students the curriculum was being designed for. (Meiners, 2014). The authors then went on to discuss how a futures-oriented lens is conveyed by the use of the word *will* as an auxiliary verb throughout the text. For example, there is a count of 42 times throughout their evaluation where the phrase *students will be able to develop/ lead/ gain, etc.* appears in relation to dance learning. The authors pointed out that by using *will*, it suggests necessity rather than possibility (may). The authors concluded with the takeaway that deciding and mandating what students should be able to know or do when it comes to dance education is challenging because the stakeholders involved in policymaking have conflicting ideologies and interests. Due to this, it advocates that teachers become agents of curriculum

design (Meiners, 2014). This lens of framing success based on teacher experience and relationships with their students, rather than framing success by standards written by policymakers outside of the classroom, was taken into consideration in the making of this capstone project.

Decolonizing Dance Pedagogy: Application of Pedagogies of Ugandan Traditional Dances in Formal Education by Mabingo is an article published online in the Journal of Dance Education in 2015 which stated that dances from African communities are gradually getting incorporated into formal education in the United States. In addition to echoing what previous authors in multiple content areas were stating about the benefits of spiral curriculum being beneficial for student learning in the way ideas are introduced, understood, revisited, then reconstructed, the author also highlighted their acknowledgment of their identity as a key part in creating a culturally sustaining classroom environment. The author exemplified several applications of Ugandan dance in formal education settings and concluded that teachers tend to bring their history into their teaching pedagogies and philosophies. It called on other teachers of nonwestern dance forms to engage in authentic research about the dances and cultures they come from; further understanding their ancestral contexts to help better develop and implement culturally inclusive pedagogy and curriculum in the dance teaching and learning process (Mabingo, 2015).

Another important article featured in the dance curriculum section of the literature review was titled, *The Importance of “Downtime” for Democratic Dance Pedagogy: Insights from a Dance Program serving Asian American Youth*. Published in 2017, the article by local dance educators Betsy Maloney Leaf and Bic Ngo examined how youth participants in a community-based dance program developed a strong sense of purpose and commitment by

leading their peers during informal, unstructured class time. The authors advocated that this is important information for educational policymakers and stakeholders to know if they aim to foster leader leadership opportunities for young dancers as part of a wider commitment to social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, or democratic teaching. They highlighted bell hooks' idea that proposed teaching as occurring everywhere, including beyond the formal structures of a classroom. They invited educational stakeholders to consider how society identifies a teacher, and empowered people to think about how the community is structured, who participates in the community, and how community practice can ignite change (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The researchers started to look for collaborative skills that were arising during their learning process, as well as look for peer feedback, support, and mentoring that occurred during unstructured portions of the class. The researchers noted the less formal class time provided students with opportunities to help each other. The authors concluded that studying dance can be a multi-layered experience, especially when opportunities arise for dancers to provide and facilitate dance leadership skills within an ensemble. The researchers in this article invited dance educators to consider the importance of unstructured class time, emphasizing that their findings are particularly important to dance educators and policymakers who want to foster leadership opportunities among young dancers as part of a commitment to social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, or democratic teaching practices.

The authors noted that further research is needed particularly with an emphasis on formalized K-12 settings, where different expectations from school administrators may affect educators' fear of not fitting a model of what a regular classroom should look like, in terms of free time and downtime in class (Leaf & Ngo, 2017). They also noted that their research is with

Hmong immigrants, and highlighted how different dimensions of their own identities were inherently informing their research process. This included their experiences as white American and Vietnamese American women committed to addressing social, cultural, and educational inequalities. They understand as researchers that their data collection and analysis may express bias from their choices and their interpretations (Leaf & Ngo, 2017).

The final section of the literature review explored dance assessment, looking at two sources that exemplify how dance educators practice inclusive assessment through different modalities. The first resource, *Assessment for Learning: Dances with Boys* (2006) was published by *Teachers TV/UK Department of Education*, and highlighted a boys' academy in east London. The students were at a sports college working with a PE department, integrating video playback into many activities in the classroom with a female dance teacher. A dance specialist worked on a warm-up with the small class of boys, who then review their performance on the video and repeat the work. They commented on valuing the experience of noticing and correcting their work. This resource demonstrated real-time examples of students using an assessment practice commonly found in sports: video playback. The dance specialist used their prior knowledge as athletes and utilizes video playback as an assessment method, where students have the opportunity to review, analyze, and repeat their work. They also utilized this tool for peer assessment, both written and verbal, which allows them to develop understandings as both dancers and audience members (Teachers TV/UK Department of Education, 2006). This capstone project dance teacher curriculum and assessment resource, which includes a student assessment resource. This resource informed the formation of this capstone project, specifically for student self-assessment.

The next dance assessment resource in this section is titled *A Guide to Movement Fundamentals: Liberating Practices for Dance Artists, Movement in Life and Art*, written by Jane Hawley and published in 2014. The *Movement Fundamentals curriculum* is a “fundamental moving paradigm training trains dancers as artists and empowering people to love and feel grateful for their bodies, as phrased by Hawley, creator of Movement Fundamentals (Hawley, 2014). It is separated into three parts: The paired principles of *alignment and function*, *range and efficiency*, and *vocabulary and intention*. Secondly, it includes ten tenets of practice which translate into what practitioners of the form should be able to do and create while using the Movement Fundamentals framework. Finally, it includes a physical practice called *The 4 Phases Practice*, which is patterned after the infinity concept: layered within each phase is a whole (Hawley, 2014).

While many assessment criteria in dance are based on technical form or representation, the *4 Phases practice* engages dancers in questions that they are evaluating and participating in. This documentation process allows all dance artists the opportunity to self-reflect over a period of time. Since self-reflection can be a component of dance assessment, within this paradigm is an assessment tool that may be transposed into many dance classroom settings. *The Four Phases* process of dancing, reflection, and documentation is utilized in the student assessment choice board featured in this capstone project.

To conclude the literature review summary, this section explored three subjects: education pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and dance pedagogy. Within each of these sections, the sub-topics of standards, curriculum, and assessment were explored. Each of these resources built off of one another and impacted the capstone project in some way, whether they informed a structure, vocabulary, framework, or main idea later transposed into the capstone

project. These resources also took into account to what extent authors highlighted their identities in relation to their research, emphasizing the importance of the application of culturally relevant pedagogy to every content area. *Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World* (2017), a text by another local and black-identified author Nyama McCarthy Brown raised by a white mom, provides several takeaways related to incorporating identity in a dance classroom setting. This draws from her own experience being a black dance student in a predominantly white environment, feeling a sense of nonbelonging and not feeling as successful at connecting what she was learning in dance to her prior knowledge of dance at home. This connects us back to the essential inquiry and purpose of this capstone, and how important and impactful it is for dance educators to address the question, *how can the Minnesota K-12 Dance Standards (revised 2018) lay a practical framework for dance educators to create equitable and inclusive assessments for student success?*

Critical Learnings

A key critical learning in the capstone process was realizing I needed to understand a broader scope beyond assessment. I initially set out to create an assessment resource, and upon researching, I realized more guidance was needed on how dance assessment was related to curriculum and lessons.

A more holistic and encompassing dance educator resource with an emphasis on inclusive and equitable assessment for both teachers and students was created to address this additional need to connect assessment with curriculum, units, and lessons.

The benefits and drawbacks of standardization additionally arose as a main takeaway. In researching how different dance sources do or do not name race, equity, or inclusion but focus heavily on specific and measurable concepts of success and progress, I realized that structure does not always equate to progress. Many educators and researchers may develop ways to teach, engage, create, and perform and they may have viable researched based theories that validate their work. However, when these systems and structures do not address the racial and cultural context, histories, and experiences of students, there is a level of disintegrity happening in the learning process. With many dance standards and policies coming from a state or policy level, a value system is created that puts these ideas at the forefront.

Right now culturally responsive teaching is not a clearly defined mandate; and although classroom systems are obviously affected by standard and accountability optics, teachers have the agency to adapt their curriculum and assessment practices to their students, giving them the power to help define and frame success in the dance classroom.

Significant Sources

The concept of Universal Learning Design (ULD), the *Illinois Teaching and Leading Standards*, and *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* served as vital and significant resources in this capstone project. ULD is a widely researched way to help students practice concept-based learning. ULD advocates that educators use student choice in the process of student assessment.

This ULD model of offering choices framed the assessment choice board in this capstone project, with additional considerations and edits taken into account. This expands upon the popularized model of ULC using a lens of equity and inclusion (Tai & Ajjawi, 2021).

The *Illinois Teaching and Leading Standards* systematically takes inventory of what culturally responsive teachers and leaders should be facilitated in a classroom setting. Several of its main ideas are transposed into these assessment resources as main ideas, followed by dance-specific prompts or sentences. Finally, *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* served as a very applicable and comparable resource, clearly connecting how the MN K-12 Dance Standards were derived (Pugh, 2006). This resource provides in-depth examples and elaborations that helped frame essential language and expectations in creating this dance assessment resource.

Project Implications

An unanticipated contextual shift happened in the midst of writing this capstone and project. I quit my teaching career that I had been working on for at least the past five years. I did not know that I would stop being a teacher in this process, but I needed to stop being a teacher to finish this process. More importantly, I realized that people creating dance resources need to have significant experience being dance educators to know what dance educators need.

I know that dance educators are intelligent people who can find great resources, but when I took time away from the classroom to focus on this capstone, I realized dance educators need time for planning and synthesizing just as much as they need resources. My taking space from teaching did not impact my project but perhaps made me think of it from a different perspective, beyond solely that of a dance teacher.

An additional variable that factors into the project implications section is that this does not resolve the need for a written dance curriculum that dance educators can simply print and teach. Many content areas such as math and reading are well-resourced with lesson plans, booklets, scopes, sequences, and unit plans that teachers can share with their teams and practice;

similarly to how one might read a play and then stage it, many content teachers can read a lesson plan then teach it. Dance educators on the other hand are typically writing their curriculum so they can read it, and then teach it. Providing more curriculum resources addresses the need to create resources that let dance teachers focus more on how they are teaching, and not have to spend so much planning time designing the many specifics related to what they are teaching.

Next Steps

There are several next steps that address how this project will go on to impact and support dance educators. First, steps need to be taken to connect local dance educators and other diverse dance educators to this resource, perhaps by networking with school districts or seeking opportunities to facilitate professional development.

Next, I seek to publish this capstone and project into a book or guide. This is because it shares my experiences as a student and teacher of dance, and I believe telling our stories has the power to unite and heal. Creating a book or guide from this capstone would allow me to have a product I can monetize and publish, creating an empowering business opportunity for me that may additionally bolster my academic career. On a larger level, further research in the field of dance education is needed on how we can systematically support new dance educators with standards-based resources. Systemizing dance resources would eventually help create a common language and vocabulary amongst dance educators, helping onboard people into the profession of dance. It is essential that resources systemized to address standards are equally addressing culturally responsive teaching practices; applying and valuing a culturally responsive lens in conjunction with dance teaching practices is a concept where more discourse and dialogue would be beneficial for both dance teachers and students.