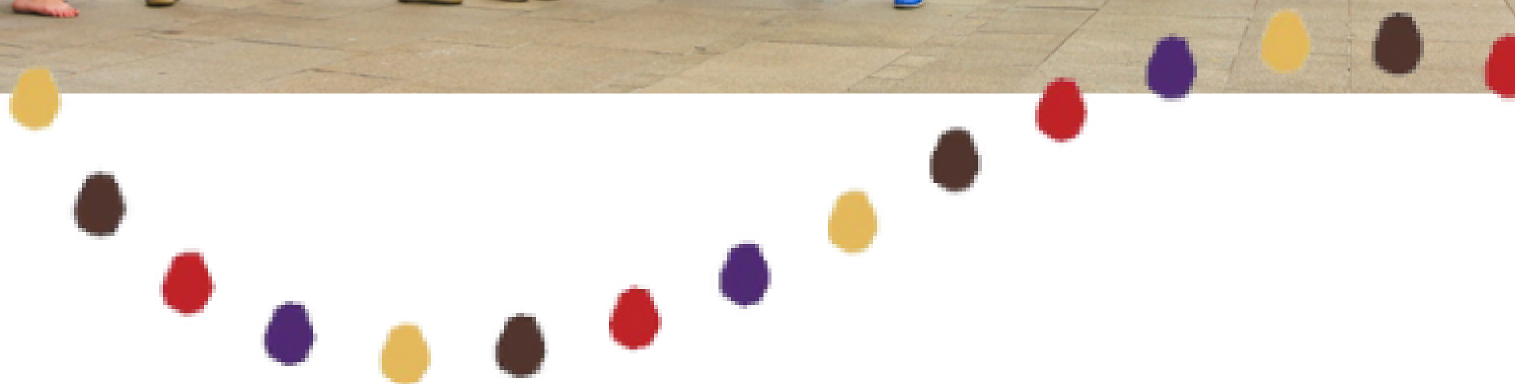
# Proceedings of Panpapanpalya 2018

the 2nd Joint Congress of Dance and the Child International and World Dance Alliance Global Education and Training Network



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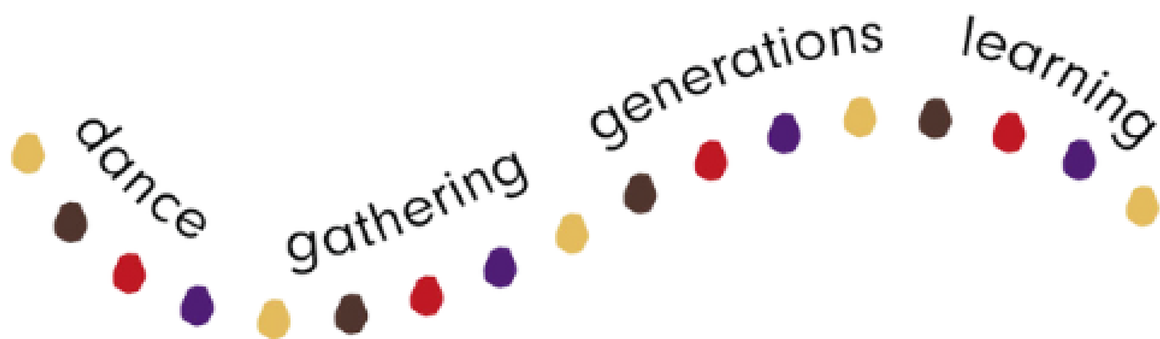

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**Front cover**

Thanks to *The Advertiser* and Panpapanpalya 2018 participants, including Australian Dance Theatre and Restless Dance Theatre.

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# Introduction to the proceedings

## Panpapanpalya 2018, the 2nd joint dance congress of daCi (Dance and the Child International) and WDA (World Dance Alliance) Global Education and Training Network

Deborah Price, Jeff Meiners and Ann Kipling Brown

### The context for the proceedings

The second joint world congress of Dance and the Child International (daCi) and World Dance Alliance Global Education and Training Network was held 8 – 13 July 2018 in Adelaide, Australia, hosted by the University of South Australia.

The world congress took place in a pre-Covid world in which travel was comparatively easy, unhindered and enabled physical contact due to cheapening flight costs.

For the joint congress, over 900 participants came together from 26 countries to dance and learn with the congress key words: dance, gathering, generations, learning. The program included a variety of activities and presentation formats. Many brought snapshot performances to showcase on the first two evenings with other chances to perform in Pop-Ups and a BigDance. There were opportunities to gather and dance, to network, share and develop knowledge in Creative Gatherings, Young People's Gatherings and Twinning projects. In addition, Teachers' Gatherings and Scholarly Gatherings focused on more academic dance study. The congress challenged a widely-held preconception that dance is a soft option for learning or study, reflected in the papers presented here.

### Publication process

After the event, authors of papers, panels, and project dialogues were invited to submit their contributions for these proceedings which are published online by Ausdance National with funding support from the University of South Australia. We note that fewer submissions were received in comparison to previous conferences, reflecting changes to publishing requirements by tertiary institutions which are highly competitive and make increasing research demands upon staff.

The following papers were chosen in a double-blind refereeing process followed by a thorough editorial process. Our sincere thanks go to the international review committee for their comprehensive feedback and time spent providing constructive

comments. Special thanks also to our editorial committee for their generous work: Anja Ali-Haapala, Kathy Baykitch, Ralph Buck, Stephanie Burridge, Julie Dyson, Clare Hall, Sue Hawksley, Sarah Knox, Gene Moyle, Sue Nichols, Nicholas Rowe, Urmimala Sarkar, Cheryl Stock, Kathy Vlassopoulos. Our appreciation also goes to Ausdance, in particular to publications editor Rachael Jennings whose attention to detail and collaborative approach was as always so helpful and supportive.

These proceedings were unfortunately delayed due to many mitigating circumstances which included the Covid pandemic and several personal challenges which impacted upon the voluntary work of many individuals working with daCi and the WDA.

So, we express special thanks to the authors for their patience and whose positive engagement with the publication process made editing these proceedings a pleasure. Their papers make an important contribution from 2018 to the field of dance education scholarship and practice.

## The papers

This focused publication of 16 papers with authors from 9 countries provides a snapshot representation of themes from the joint dance congress broadly embracing *dance, gathering, generations, learning*. The papers range from the beginnings of dance in the early years through the different stages of school and to further education – and beyond through the lifespan to the joys and challenges of dancing in later years with lived experiences that bring changing bodies, new insights and wisdom.

The collection begins with three special keynotes from David McAllister, Katie Dawson and Sally Chance that have been carefully changed into written papers.

**David McAllister's (Australia) Keynote 'A great dancing nation: Australia's best kept secret'** opened the week and his paper provides the context for the congress, locating the cultural place of dance in Australia. David draws upon his lived experience as his journey took him to his position as Artistic Director of the Australian Ballet who were performing that week as part of the new Adelaide Dance Festival. David's reflections included his perspective on the benefits of dance to the Australian community and suggests: *'Maybe we will finally embrace dance, in the same way that our first peoples have and use it as a way of building our identity'*.

**Katie Dawson and Andrea Beckham (USA)** were a resounding success mid-week in meeting the challenge to provide a participatory keynote titled **'Make Your Move: Bodies Creating Change'** for all ages. They have succeeded too in translating their active presentation into an engaging keynote paper which invites readers, as they did with the world dance congress attendees, to consider the body as a place and tool for positive change. Read on to see how they have captured their presentation in a paper with images and a vimeo link!

**Sally Chance (Australia)** also reworked her keynote from the final morning of the congress as a paper and provides the prompting title: **'Tiny forces, twists and folds:**

**Why dance is our first language'**. Sally's paper requires us to consider foundational experiences of movement in the early years of life focusing on how babies and very young children have capacities that are showcased within the heightened space of a live performance.

The first two papers stem directly from the 2018 congress. In **'Panpapanpalya 2018: Dance, gathering, generations, learning: a reflective report', Deborah Price, Mahmood Nathie** and **Jeff Meiners (Australia)** provide an overview of the congress. The paper reports on the weeklong event with the authors contemplating successes and challenges from planning and realizing a collaborative joint congress that will inform future plans.

The paper by **Cathy Adamek (Australia) 'Creative learning through dance: Exploring effects on mental wealth across generations'** provides a literature review that supported a University of South Australia research project associated with the Panpapanpalya 2018 global dance congress. Focusing on dance leaders and congress participants a choreographic process titled *Creative Gatherings* culminated on the final congress day in twelve site-specific dance installations presented as a promenade performance at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). The documentary *Dance Epidemic* presents an overview of this research project. Special thanks to **Jen Brown** PhD, digital artist and designer for the creation and production of the video.

The next paper **'When the genesis of dance comes from the child'** describes a research project designed and implemented by **Clare and Liz Battersby (New Zealand)** who explored an aspect of the conference asking: how we can 'explore innovative ways forward that address UNESCO's aims for quality, inclusive and lifelong dance teaching and learning'? The authors subsequently worked with a group of 8 to 12-year-old Aotearoa/New Zealand boys, using a Reggio Emilia 'lens'.

Emphasising the theme of generations dancing, daCi 1978 elder **Joan Pope's (Australia)** paper **'Thank you teachers: a personal reflection on, and an account of dance in my childhood'** looks back across her life from her perspective as a grandmother, offering a heartfelt and thoughtful expression of gratitude to her teachers and their influencers.

Positioning from the perspective of another stage of life, independent artist **Sarah Neville (Australia)** similarly offers a paper with an intergenerational theme **'Dancing with my family'**. This introduces readers to a Family in Residence model that frames her artistic research over three separate case studies from Port Adelaide to The Flinders Ranges in South Australia and further abroad to Belgium and Croatia. Neville's contemplative writing provides insight into the shift she made that expanded her practice to 'connect better with the world', by keeping her present and immediately responsive to her family and the people around her.

Focusing on ballet in Japan, **Ebe Daigo & Seiichi Sakuno (Japan)** present a study titled **'Comparative study of audience attitudes and behavioural intentions to engage with ballet in university'**. Their paper explains research which aimed to determine

whether experiencing ballet through a workshop/communication program as part of a university physical education class influenced audience attitudes and behavioural intentions towards ballet. Their main finding demonstrates that the effect of such a learning event can be shown using statistical analysis, providing a potential design for future research studies.

Next, the paper **'Culturally responsive dance pedagogy – taking the project Global Dance Education to a third level'** builds upon previous daCi research undertaken since 2012 by **Ann Kipling Brown, Susan Koff, Jeff Meiners and Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (Canada, USA, Australia, Denmark)**. A summary of the earlier work is provided which focused on learning contexts. Research tools and curriculum considerations are identified along with increasing awareness of the need for culturally responsive teaching with young people. Examples of culturally responsive pedagogy are provided including a report on the initiative titled 'Teachers' Gatherings' at the Panpapanpalya 2018 congress which facilitated further opportunities to gain insight from a range of contexts across the world into dance educators' ideas and practices along with challenges and solutions.

Subsequently, the paper **'The influence of dance for disabled young adults' by Ruth-Anne J Andrew, Nicole J Reinders & Joseph FX DeSouza (Canada)**, provides considerable detail of a research study that focused on a pilot project dance class over five weeks. Drawing upon a disability rights model, the study empowered individuals and focused on abilities rather than diagnoses and impairments. Preliminary results indicated positive learning outcomes for the young participants with recommendations for future studies using this model.

**Deborah Dodd Macedo's** paper **'Kinaesthetic pedagogy and getting to know in movement: Experiential perspectives for dance teacher's education' (Brazil)** outlines theories and scholarly writings that underpin kinaesthetic perception within her research. The role of kinaesthetic perceptions in dance teacher education is addressed, linking the dancer's kinaesthetic information to sensorial and creative learning processes, arguing that the sensation of one's movement is the core of the dance teacher's education process.

**Alfdaniels Mabingo's** paper **'"Interhuman pedagogy": Ubuntu as a guiding principle in teaching and learning of Ugandan Indigenous dance' (Uganda)** explains 'interhuman pedagogy' as developing from the philosophy of Ubuntu. Specific questions invite teachers of Indigenous dances from African cultures to reflect on how to develop and apply pedagogy that might honour and value the epistemological and ontological philosophies in the communities from where the dances emanate. The dominance of Anglo-Saxon and Eurocentric traditions are considered, positioning pedagogies of Indigenous African dances and their underpinning philosophies as significant for diversity in contemporary multicultural and cross-cultural contexts.

Two papers relate to school curriculum as a focus for learning. **Juliette O'Brien's** paper **'Teaching history and English through dance and dance through English and history' (Australia)** looks at the various approaches used in teaching a high school cross-curricular unit titled "African American Culture from Slavery to the Present". Activities

and outcomes, along with student testimonies relating to schemes of work are explained with the uses of dance in teaching units dealing with a multitude of cultures as the focus here.

Shifting to the school curriculum for primary students, the paper by **Kerrin Rowlands (Australia)** titled **'Investigating teacher's experiences implementing the Australian dance curriculum in a primary school',** draws upon a research study that focused on key experiences teachers perceived as significant for their planning and implementation of the Australian Dance Curriculum (ADC). One finding asserts that new approaches to school dance teaching require constructivist, student-centred pedagogies to intersect with the ADC as policy and with dance education theory.

The selection of papers concludes with **Adrienne Sansom's** and **Sandy Farquhar's (New Zealand)** title: '**Embodiment as a pedagogy of peace**'. The authors draw on post-feminist theory to argue for a focus on the embodiment of peace in educational research and pedagogy, to recognise and engage with body and emotions. A renewed educational engagement with peace is called for as integrally related to emotions, unknowing, pleasure and fantasy; and for children to be validated as living beings experiencing the world through bodily expression, vital for early learning.

## Summary

In summary, these papers provide a snapshot from presentations that addressed the 2018 congress themes of dance, gathering, generations, learning. A wide range of conceptual underpinnings and diverse practices reveal processes, methodologies and pedagogies driving dance education.

We appreciate the support of all those who made the proceedings possible and hope that you enjoy reading these contributions.

Deborah Price, Jeff Meiners and Ann Kipling Brown.

Co-editors

# Keynote address

## A great dancing nation: Australia's best kept secret

David McAllister AM, former Artistic Director, The Australian Ballet

### Introduction

I must say it is a great honour to be standing here in front of such a knowledgeable and talented assembly of dance aficionados. As this is my first keynote address, I feel I am very much reliving my dancing days and feeling all those familiar emotions I would go through heading into an opening night of a new ballet. Standing in the wings before the big premiere, gazing out on the light filled stage, touching wood and summoning all my strength to bring to life the hours of training and rehearsals that had got me to that point. I guess in one way or another my whole life has led me towards this talk today as dance has been the constant narrative that has threaded through my entire life. My earliest memories are of dancing as a toddler in front of the television watching my reflection, being the star of my very own private show. This inauspicious beginning led to an 18-year professional career with The Australian Ballet which saw me travel constantly around our vast country and across the globe. I was equally blessed to dance on some of the most renowned stages of the world as well as performing at some very modest regional halls in some fairly remote places. After hanging up my dance shoes and leaving behind the tights and sometimes tiaras, for the last 17 and a half years, I have had the great honour of being the Artistic Director of our national company The Australian Ballet.

Dance has certainly had a transformative influence on my life. I loved being a dancer. As the saying goes 'Once a dancer always a dancer' and that certainly rang true with me. Interestingly the further away from my on-stage career I get, the more glorious the memories of my performances become!!! Thankfully there are several commercially available recordings that can quickly burst this balloon of self-deception. But enough about me, today I want to look more broadly at the place that dance has had in shaping our country. Obviously as my whole career has been spent focused on classical ballet, I guess this talk will be viewed very much through that lens. This is in no way to make comment on its importance in the hierarchy of dance, as I believe every form of dance to be equally valuable, it just so happens this was the path I went down and where my physical facility seemed to be most at home. I also don't profess to be an expert in any way on all the other myriad of dance modalities, rather an enthusiastic onlooker for most. So, there may be areas that I tend to acknowledge but not elaborate on, as I try and follow the wise advice of my late mother who always used to say 'stick to what you know'.

## Dance's cultural place in Australia

When you think of modern Australia, its dancing credentials are not often the virtues that are widely heralded. We are sold as a country of wide-open spaces, beautiful landscapes and unique wildlife, a nation of diverse people who love the outdoors and embrace every sport you can name. Our cultural legacy to the world is not often high on the list of our beguiling attributes. If they are mentioned it is more likely to be our famous actors or singers who will be pushed to the fore, dance hardly rates a mention. Today I would like to upend that notion as I believe we are indeed a great dancing nation and one that has a great deal to be proud of. As dance writer and academic Hilary Crampton said during her life, she was a 'dance activist' and today I am emboldened to follow her call and place dance in its rightful place as one of the great drivers which has shaped our nation.

The owners of this land, our first Australians, certainly understand the importance of dance, and to this day as the oldest continuous culture on the planet, continue to have dance as a fundamental element of their cultural life. While I am not in a position to elaborate on the rich and proud heritage of Australia's first peoples dance culture, this quote from Phillemon Mosby, Torres Strait Island Regional Councillor, sums up in very few words the central nature of dance to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander brothers and sisters:

> The dancing grounds are where we connect with our Ancestors, where our heritage, language and identity are passed on. – (Phillemon Mosby, 2018)

I feel lucky to live in a place that has such an enduring and fundamental connection to this culture. It is a shame that our migrating forebears did not understand or embrace these values at the point of first contact with the first Australians back in 1788. On researching this talk I have come across the book *Dancing with Strangers* by Inga Clendinnen (2005) which charts the early years of contact between Australia's first people and the new arrivals. From quick browsing, it would seem that our past 230 years may well have been very different if there had have been greater understanding of the ceremonial dances shared at these early encounters. I look forward to some deeper reading of this interesting book over the coming week as I take a mini winter break!

During these first years of the new Colony at Sydney Cove the new settlers quickly used dance as a way of connecting with the lives they had left behind. Dancing was a way of coming together and building a community. Just as there were more musical instruments per head of population than back in England at the time, dancehalls sprung up in the new colony where retreating to dance was a way of escaping the harsh realities of daily life. As Heather Clarke writes on her website (*The History of Music and Dance in Australia 1788–1840*):

> Dance was a fundamental element of everyday social life in the colony and many references to dancing in the earliest days of settlement exist. At all levels of society, dancing provided the opportunity to maintain civilisation far from their native shores, preserving culture and heritage, and above all establishing a sense of community. For the better classes, dance was an

> expression of education and gentility; for the lower classes, an opportunity to gather and carouse. (2018)

The dances were fundamentally brought to the colony by those who travelled here and there was always much interest in the influx of new information from each arriving ship. The new arrivals brought the latest trends from home, and these were eagerly taken up in all of the thriving dance halls. There were also original versions of these dances created in the colony and were usually named after notable leaders, these included such titles as *Lord Sydney's Fancy* and *The Lord Howe's jig*. As the new settlers spread out from the various arrival ports isolation became a great inhibiting factor to the colonists. During this expansion, organised dances became even more important as a way of coming together and it was not unusual for people to travel great distances to take part. They could often last for up to three days, allowing for the settlers to reconnect to the community they had left behind.

Relatively speaking things moved quite quickly from these humble beginnings. The first theatre built in the new colonies was, as Ted Pask wrote in his book *Enter the Colonies Dancing* (1979) 'an incredibly crude structure'. It was built in 1825 near Sydney but was quickly superseded by Mr Barnett Levey's Theatre Royal in 1832, in George Street Sydney. The first ballet produced was in 1835 *The Fair Maid of Perth* or also known as *The Rival Lovers*. It was however the discovery of gold in Victoria and NSW in the late 1840's that saw the greatest change in the fortunes of the colonies. With the huge influx of migrants looking to make their fortunes, there also came many dance performers equally eager to explore this place of opportunity. Most of these arrivals took place between 1853 and 1870 making this a boom time for dance lovers. They hailed from many different parts of Europe and their quality and experience varied greatly. Most famous of these was Lola Montes. Born in Limerick, Ireland as Maria Delores Eliza Gilbert, she became an international celebrity of her time, and from all accounts her dancing was far overshadowed by her 'reckless private life'. Her world-famous Spider dance scandalised the 'new world' audiences with the Sydney Morning Herald remarking 'The Spider Dance is the most Libertinish and indelicate performance that could be given on a public stage' (Trestle Theatre Company, 2018). She indeed outraged the rather prudish 'polite' society of the time, but the general public could not get enough of her.

## Beginnings of ballet in Australia

It was during this period that we also saw the transition where dance went from principally being a participatory pass time to that of a performance art. Theatres were being built around the colonies at a remarkable rate, and while people continued to enjoy dancing at dance halls and more regularly held society balls, there was also the opportunity to partake in dance as audience members. This continued to develop with dancers of greater quality and fame becoming more regular arrivals to our shores. Three of the most famous dancers to grace our country in the new century were ballerina's Adeline Genee in 1913, followed by Anna Pavlova in 1926 and then Olga Spessivtzeva in 1934. Of these it was possibly the tour of Pavlova that most captured the hearts of those who saw her. A young Robert Helpmann was one who was touched

by this great ballerina even appearing with her in performances in Melbourne as an extra. It is said that it was Pavlova that encouraged him to seek a career in dance and also add the extra 'n' to his surname to give it more 'theatrical' distinction. Indeed, my own ballet teacher in Perth Evelyn Hodgkinson, was inspired to branch out from her highland dance classes and take up ballet after seeing Pavlova as a child. She even created a version of Pavlova's famous ballet *Autumn Leaves* which we used to dance at our ballet school concerts, with no doubt Pavlova turning in her grave!! One could say however the true testimony to her enduring legacy in Australia and New Zealand was the (much contested) creation of the dessert the 'Pavlova' which we see as an iconic Australia dish and is still served across our nation to conclude many a celebratory dinner. Ted Pask, himself a great collector of Pavlova memorabilia, wrote of her legacy:

> No other artiste of the dance, before or since, has inspired so many to want to dance… even today, nearly half a century after her death, children are enrolled at ballet schools because their grandmothers saw Pavlova dance. (1979)

## Ballets Russes in Australia

But it could be argued that the most influential dance company to come to our shores and really shape the cultural life of Australia were the tours of the various De Basil Ballets Russes companies. This company originally set up in 1931, was the successor to the famous Ballets Russes of Serge Diaghilev. Diaghliev's Ballet Russes was seen as the saviour of ballet in Europe at the turn of the last century and almost singlehandedly changed the course of ballet in the modern world. With dancers such as Nijinsky, Karsavina and Pavlova, Choreographers, Fokine, Massine and Balanchine; collaborating artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Goncharov; designers Jean Cocteau and Coco Chanel, Composers Debussy, Stravinsky and Ravel, Diaghilev modernised and revolutionised ballet until his sudden death in 1929. It took three years for Colonel Wassily de Basil along with Rene Bloom to form the 'new' Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo to continue the work started by Diaghilev. Only 5 years after its creation, De Basil's company was invited to come to Adelaide as part of the city's Centenary celebrations. Bringing a mix of the Diaghilev repertoire and some of the most contemporary ballets by its star choreographer Leonide Massine, this company was an instant sensation and went on to tour the country staying much longer than originally planned. Having captured the hearts of an increasingly culturally curious country, they cemented a quick return of De Basil's Ballets Russes in 1938 featuring the world famous 'Baby Ballerinas' Irina Baronova, Tatiana Riabouchinska and Tamara Toumanova. Once again, the company was fated with an overwhelming response from its eager public. The dancers became media stars endorsing products as diverse as washing machines to cigarettes and enjoyed or maybe endured, farewells verging on the hysterical with tearfully devoted fans showering the train tracks with flowers as they left each city. This Ballets Russes mania secured yet another speedy return in 1939 to 1940.

Staging works with designs by Picasso, Matisse, Miro and Derain to name just a few meant that the Australian audiences had indeed been seeing major artworks

by the most celebrated contemporary artists well before the Herald Contemporary Exhibition of 1939 which was widely thought to be the first time works by these artists were seen in Australia. The company also gathered around them young Australian artists, designers and photographers who they commissioned to create program covers, program photographs and even design new ballets which were premiered in Australia. One of these was a young Sidney Nolan who created the designs for Serge Lifar's ballet *Icare*. The legacy of these company's tours was the basis for a 4 year study that we at The Australian Ballet, partnering with the Adelaide University and the National Library in Canberra undertook between 2006 and 2009 to chart the impact of this company on Australia's cultural life.

## The birth of 'Australian' ballet

While the performances were significant, the biggest impact was when dancers such as Helene Kirsova, Edouard Borovansky and Kira Bousloff along with other of their compatriots decided to stay in Australia when the various tours ended. Kirsova, Borovansky and Bousloff each started schools and then companies in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth respectively. These pioneers harnessed the new-found love for ballet in Australia and began the first fully professional companies in the country at a time when any aspiring dancers would need to leave our shores to have a career in ballet. It was the sowing of these seeds which lead in fact to the birth of The Australian Ballet. On the final night of the Borovansky Ballet when Peggy Van Praagh, who had been brought in to run the company after the sudden death of Borovansky, made an impassioned speech calling for the establishment of a fulltime national Australian ballet company. In the audience that night was the then treasurer and future Prime Minister Harold Holt and so began the manoeuvring that would see the establishment of the first federally funded dance company in Australia.

## Contemporary dance's evolution

At around the same time of these Ballets Russes tours, contemporary dance also had its foundation in Australia with the arrival of Gertrud Bodenwieser. A 'New Dance' proponent inspired by Isadora Duncan and Ruth St Denis in her youth, Bodenwieser went on to create her own form of dance informed by the work of François Delsarte, Rudolf von Laban and Emile Jacques Dalcroze. Since starting her own school in 1919 and then her company, Tanzgruppe Bodenwieser (Bodenwieser dance group), she toured extensively around Europe during the 1920's and 30's. Being of Jewish faith and with the rise of the Nazi party, she was forced to leave her home of Vienna. She arrived in Australia having fled via Columbia to join the dancers of her company who had been performing in 1939 as a specialty act on the J.C, Williamson review circuit.

Setting up a school in Sydney, she taught a wide range of classes to children, aspiring dancers even providing movement classes for actors. Between 1940 to 1954 she toured a company of dancers around Australia presenting her works both created in Vienna and also new works which related to her adopted home. Her local students Anita Ardell, Keith Bain, Margaret Chapple, Coralie Hinkley and others who began their dance careers with the Bodenwieser Ballet all went on to make major

contributions to Australian dance, paving the way for the thriving contemporary dance scene we enjoy today.

## Immigration and the rise of folkloric dance in Australia

Migration in each generation of our history has brought dance riches to the communities around our country. The Post Second World War migration from Europe included many Eastern European new settlers who brought with them the various national dances of their homelands. There were impressive dance teachers too like Madame Marina Berezowsky, who was a dynamo of a teacher, training generations of ballet dancers in both classical ballet but most notably in Character and Folkloric dance. She founded the Kolobok Folk Dance company, the first professional Folkloric dance company which toured around Australia for over a decade. While we may not have a company like this performing today, across the nation there are still wonderful communities celebrating their national dances, connecting with their new country by sharing their home counties culture. This tradition has continued with the subsequent arrivals from the Asian regions and most recently the sub continent and Africa.

One of these 'New Australians' as we grew up calling them, who had a huge influence on me as a young boy was Guillermo Keys-Arenas, who came from Mexico to Australia in 1974. He worked with the Perth City Ballet staging one of his dance pieces inspired by his Mexican dance heritage which was my first experience out of the confines of my Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) dance training manual. While this piece may not have had a profound impact on Australia's dance history, he is probably better known for his involvement in the Shell Folkloric Festival which was annually staged at the Sydney Opera House and which he directed from 1979 to 1994. This was a true celebration of multi-cultural Australia and a fantastic dance explosion which happened each year under the sails of the iconic opera house.

It was festivals such as this that paved the way for dance to become a natural part of our national celebrations. Each Australia Day it is now commonplace to have dancers from around the world who now call Australia home performing together in street parades, open air performances or in civic performance spaces. These opportunities allow us all to share our individual heritages but also to unite in celebration of our diverse and poly-cultured nation. In fact, International studies have shown that dance has measurable outcomes when it comes to building a sense of belonging and community. Recently, newly arrived migrant groups in the UK and Europe have positively shown that involving asylum seekers in community dance programs has fostered a greater 'sense of belonging' for all those who participated, fostering a greater understanding between the new arrivals and the existing communities (Francis, 2017; Kaukko & Wilkinson, 2018. While there are some great people doing similar work here, I believe this is something that we could more fully embrace in our country given our current internationally poor reputation when it comes to the treatment of our asylum seekers.

## Australia's cultural renaissance (of sorts)

Since the cultural expansion years of the 1960s and 70s when governments both state and federal set up bodies such as the Australia Council, and the various state arts departments, the number of dance companies and individual dance artists working in Australia have grown. With this we have seen the growth of opportunities for our Australian dance artists to be sent far and wide to showcase the creativity of our nation. There is hardly a year that our Indigenous dance company Bangarra Dance Theatre, the Sydney Dance Company, Australian Dance Theatre or even The Australian Ballet are not seen performing on the world stage. Our companies and creative artists are being commissioned to create and present works at international dance festivals across the globe. We as a dance community are replacing the 'shrimp on the barbie' view of Australia to one of a creative nation ready to inspire and entertain with our unique way of moving.

Australian dancers are recognised for their fearlessness, athleticism, and openly engaging qualities on stage. Bangarra Dance Theatre our premier Indigenous dance company draws on the world's longest surviving living cultural traditions and re-interprets it for a modern world, highlighting the beauty and strength of our Indigenous culture. By contrast in ballet and also with our contemporary dance creators we have not been stifled by a long history of dance tradition, but rather are renowned for reimagining some of the iconic heritage works and creating new forms of movement that are both individual and ground-breaking. Our 'have a go' attitude and larrikin characteristics are very present in our dance style, and it is these qualities that make Australian dance and indeed Australian dancers, unique.

We are exceptionally good at creating great dancers! There are Australian trained dancers having huge careers on the world stage in some of the most prestigious companies. In the ballet world alone, there is hardly a company where you don't find talented Aussies flourishing. Off the top of my head there is Steven McRae and Alexander Campbell both Principal artists of the Royal Ballet Covent Garden, Jenna Roberts also a principal at Birmingham Royal Ballet, Hanna O'Neil Premier Danseur of the Paris Opera Ballet, Luke Ingham Principal Dancer of the San Francisco Ballet, Stephanie Williams who is dancing with the American Ballet Theatre, Chelsea Meis and Jack Bertinshaw at The National Ballet of Canada and Cameron Hunter who is with the Staattsballett Berlin, and this is without even googling! I know there are equally as many great Aussie contemporary dancers enjoying the same success across the globe. We now also export great choreographers, designers and Artistic Directors like Stanton Welch at Houston Ballet and Robert Curran at Louisville Ballet to name just a few. As a country we definitely punch well above our weight at producing world class dance artists while also fielding amazing talent to fuel the 70 dance companies listed on the Ausdance website as of last week. Australia is a powerhouse of dance!

So, what is the reason for all this talent? I think it is the amazing teachers around the country who are dedicating their lives to the dance education of these young people. I like to say in every country town across Australia there is a pub, a Chinese restaurant, and a ballet school. I salute these great people who are sharing the love of dance so far and wide. I know the importance my teacher had on me as a young

person. I was an unruly, undisciplined kid who was known at time to terrorise my family. A remedial reader and not generally that attentive in school, finding dance opened up a whole new world. It was being introduced to a physical discipline that challenged me both mentally and physically and being inspired by my teacher to reach for goals that I found exciting that pushed me to achieve in many other areas of my life. Dance teachers not only train us to move in a certain way but offer an entry into a world where you can transform yourself and become the master of your own body. They teach us life lessons in perseverance, tenacity, and determination. I think we are blessed in Australia to have a high level of dance training across the country. There are many great organisations that provide training guidelines such as the Royal Academy of Dance, the Australian Institute of Classical Dance and the Cecchetti Society along with resources like Ausdance. Our teachers are proactive in ensuring a more progressive way of teaching dance to the new generations of young people. Gone is the sarcasm and bullying of the past, now there is much greater emphasis on inclusion, creativity and nurturing to produce more balanced and well-rounded young dancers.

## The benefits of dance to the community

Dance companies around the globe have also seen the benefits that dance can provide to the broader community. I am a prime example of a person who is a kinetic learner. Until I started dancing I was struggling with the rigid environment of traditional learning. Through dance I found a new way of relating to learning skills and the motivation to adapt to the more conventional teaching methods. These programs offered by dance companies specialise in providing ways that children like myself can discover how dance can help them understand not only their own body but unlock the joy of learning. At The Australian Ballet we have an 'in schools' program in which we offer an opportunity for schools in both remote and high diversity areas to engage with dance as part of their education experience. As school funding is stretched ever tighter, it is often the arts programs that fall away. It is my belief that through an experience with dance in these less resourced schools, we can help these young people discover their potential though movement and to enhance their learning experience. It would be also great to demystify the 'elitist' tag which can often make these students feel that dance and especially ballet is not for them. I look forward to the day when we have dancers from all over the country who either are going to see our performances or even joining the company who can trace their love of dance back to a visit from The Australian Ballet's Education unit at their school.

But being involved in dance is no longer only for bright young things, the health benefits of dancing is being felt across a wide range of the community. There are classes for adult beginners in all forms of dance, zumba, swing, ballet and ballroom for all ages. Even the Australian Department of Health lists the health benefits of taking part in dance classes. While the aerobic, flexibility and postural advantages along with the strengthening and balance components are well known, the psychological benefits are also becoming equally well known. A Swedish study of youth struggling with depression and anxiety found that the controlled group that took dance classes reported a boost in their mental health and moods against the other members of the

study who did not take part in the dance program. It was also found that these positive effects lasted as long as eight months after they finished taking the classes (Sydney Morning Herald, Screening for Mental health, 2018)

The health sciences in fact are fully embracing the use of dance as a way of bringing greater quality of life to patients with various health challenges. Possibly the highest profile of these, is use of dance in the treatment of Parkinson's disease which began as a collaboration between the Mark Morris Dance group and Brooklyn Parkinsons group in 2001. Since this beginning it and has grown to be offered in more than 100 communities across 20 countries with classes offered across Australia.

Other groups who have been benefiting from dance therapy are dementia sufferers. The Einstein Aging Study, summarised in the 2003 *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that dancing compared with several other physical and mental pursuits was the most beneficial in helping prevent dementia. Apart from the benefits of heightened cardiovascular improvements gained from the exercise which we know aids brain health, the need to learn and remember numerous dance movements produces a constant and very valuable challenges to the brain, thus building effective brain function.

It would seem there is hardly an area that cannot be touched by the power of dance. Even with our sports obsession here in Australia the relationship between dance and sport is one that grows ever closer. Unlike in the past when I was dancing, if one was faced with a major injury we would be sent off to Olympic park for some advice from the sports medicine fraternity. Now our medical team are being sort out to help rehabilitate our elite athletes. While we have gained a great deal from the amazing Sports medicine which has flourished in our country. Our Healthcare team over the past 20 years has been investing in research that is leading the world in the treatment of many common lower limb and hip dance injuries. We have developed some amazing preventative programs that have eliminated various injuries completely from our roster. While part of this research has included working with athletes from tennis, netball, basketball, rugby and soccer to chart the differences between elite athletes and professional dancers. We are now regularly consulting with and treating Olympic sports men and women as well as players from both the Australian Football League and Cricket Australia using methods of treatment and rehabilitation that were developed to aid our dancers.

## In conclusion

So, with dance now even infiltrating to the hallowed ground of our sporting elite I think you will see that we have provided a vibrant thread which has been woven to the social fabric of our country. While not always centre stage in our mainstream historical recollections, as with human history, dance has been and will always be an instinctive way with which we can free the imagination and fuel our soul. But where will it lead us in this complex and ever-changing modern world?

Maybe we will finally embrace dance, in the same way that our first peoples have and use it as a way of building our identity. Indeed, there have already been ground

breaking dance works that have been used to shape who we are. Works like *Skin*, *Mathinna*, *Bennelong* and recently *Dark Emu* by Bangarra Dance Theatre have helped us understand through dance, the rich culture of our first Australians and their important place as the owners of this land. The collaboration between Bangarra Dance Theatre and The Australian Ballet back in 1997 with *Rites*, was an opportunity to demonstrate a view of real reconciliation. It came at a time where there was little hope in this space with the government of the day refusing to acknowledge the pain and anguish caused to the 'Stolen Generations' and 11 long years before the Kevin Rudd apology.

Garry Stewart's and Nigel Jamieson's *Honour Bound* was another amazingly theatrical dance work that was inspired by and highlighted the predicament of Australian Guantanamo detainee David Hicks. It was created in 2006 a year before his release and came at a time when his plight was highly visible in the mainstream media, offering an emotional insight into this man's complex and often divisive situation. But there have been many works by other important Australian choreographers such as Graeme Murphy, Meryl Tankard, Leigh Warren and Natalie Weir to name just a few, who have held up a mirror to their fellow Australians to reflect both our shining strengths and our often-hidden weaknesses. I hope we can look forward to a future where dance becomes ever more central to the lives of all Australians. Whether it be through participating in various dances forms in their local communities or engaging with thoughtful dance performances that remind us of our unique qualities and tell our own stories. I look forward to seeing what this future holds and where our very own 'merry' dance will lead us!

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## Biography

**David McAllister** joined The Australian Ballet in 1983 and was promoted to principal artist in 1989. During his time with the company, her danced many principal roles, including those in *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, *Coppelia*, *Manon*, *La Sylphide*, John Cranko's *Onegin* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and Jiri Kylian's *Stepping Stones*. In 1985 he won Bronze at the Fifth International Ballet Competition in Moscow. Throughout his career, David made numerous guest appearances worldwide, dancing with Bolshoi Ballet, the Kirov Ballet, the Georgian State Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, The Birmingham Royal Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre and, in 1992, as part of a Royal Gala performance in London in the presence of the Princess of Wales. In 2000 he completed a Graduate Diploma in Arts and Entertainment Management and in 2001, took his final bow as a dancer. In July of that year, David became Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet. He was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2004 Australia Day Honours List. In 2015, David premiered a new production of The Sleeping Beauty for The Australian Ballet.

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# Keynote address

## Make Your Move: Bodies Creating Change

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### Abstract

Based on a belief that every time we move together we reconfigure the world, this all ages keynote invites World Dance Congress attendees to consider the body as a place and tool for positive *change*. First we consider global examples of young people who use their bodies to create and lead social change movements. Then we explore how centering the body in education can increase engagement, cultural relevance and learning outcomes for all learners. We conclude with reflection on and through our own bodies as we make an individual and collective move together towards a more just and equitable world.

Keywords: embodiment, dance, social change, educational change

### Welcome to Make Your Move: Bodies Creating Change

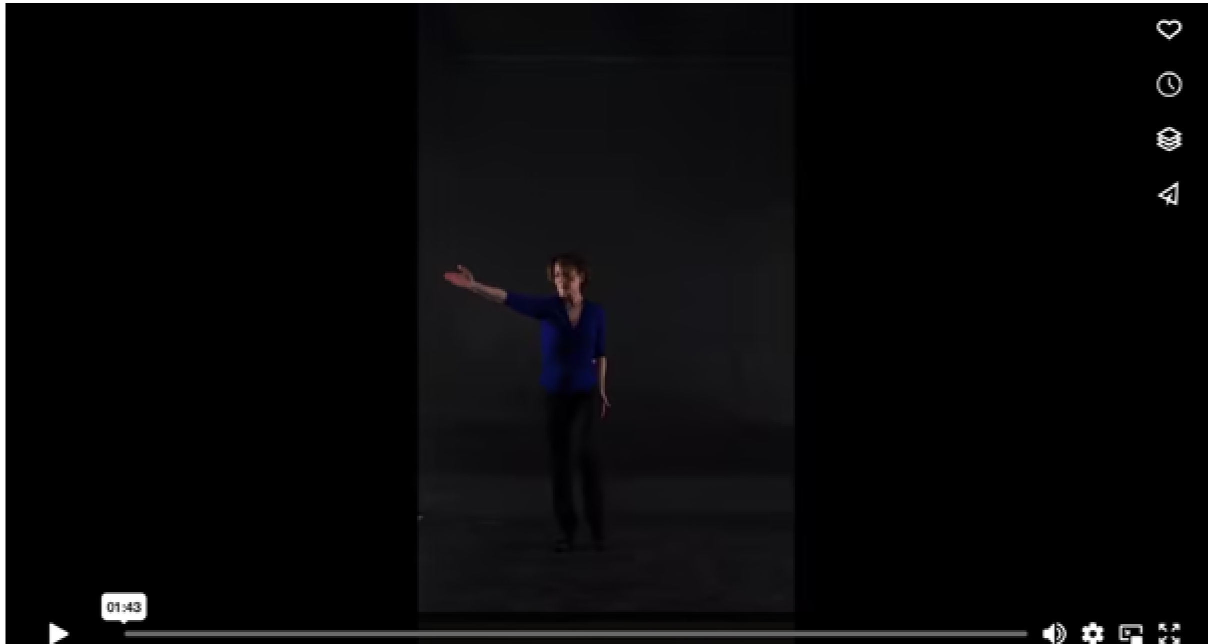
*The stage begins in darkness. Kathryn Dawson and Andrea Beckham enter with a flowing, treading movement from opposite directions. They meet in the middle of the stage. Their arms extend to lock together around each other's waists in a gesture of sisterhood. Slowly they tread toward the audience, united. Mid-stage, they pause, share an acknowledgement of parting and separate. Dawson moves upstage left; Beckham counters downstage right.*

*Then, a solo dance expression of the poem, 'To the Foot from Its Child', by Pablo Neruda (1974), is performed by Beckham as Dawson observes.*

To the Foot from Its Child

> A child's foot doesn't know it's a foot yet
> And it wants to be a butterfly or an apple
> But then the rocks and pieces of glass,
> the streets, the stairways
> and the roads of hard earth
> keep teaching the foot that it can't fly,

that it can't be a round fruit on a branch.
Then the child's foot
was defeated, it fell
in battle,
it was a prisoner,
condemned to life in a shoe. (p. 184–185)




Video 'Dawson and Beckham Make Your Move': https://vimeo.com/385988420

*At the end of the movement, Beckham and Dawson share a look of acknowledgement. They walk slowly across the space and meet at center stage.*

We want to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains, the Kaurna people. We acknowledge their continuing culture, their link to this land, and their elders, past, present and future. We want to thank Jeff Meiners and the international and Australian committees for Panpapanpalya 2018, for the tremendous opportunity to be with you today.

**Speaker:** My name is Katie Dawson. I am a university drama professor who studies the relationship between the arts and how we engage in and own our learning.

**Mover:** My name is Andrea Beckham. I am a university-based dance educator. I choreograph, I improvise, and I am deeply interested in all things movement.

We are thrilled to have this opportunity to engage with all of you about the power and possibility of the body as a place and space to make positive change in the world. Today, we will consider how learning in and through the body offers us a way to create, to critically engage, and to make positive change with/in ourselves, with/in each other, and with/in the world, as part of our human right to live a life of dignity. We are going to do our work together in a very special way.

**Speaker:** Over the next 40 minutes I will share some thoughts and ideas…

**Mover:** Then I will help us make a move – we will use our bodies to create and reflect on what we've heard.

We will do this, because each time we move together we re-configure the world and know each other differently.

A positive way to begin a new gathering is to make a personal connection between participants.

**Mover:** So, let's start by using our bodies to see and hear who is in the room.

**Speaker:** In a moment, I'm going to ask question.

**Mover:** Then I'll ask you to make a move and some noise in whatever way your body likes to move if Katie's question is true for you.

**Speaker:** And then we'll cue you to stop, like this (*makes a gesture*).

Let's try an example. Are you named Jeff Meiners? Jeff Meiners please make a move and some noise. *(Jeff Meiners makes a move and some noise as a model response.)* Got it? Are we ready to give it a try?

**Speaker:** Are you a dancer, a visual arts maker, a music maker, a filmmaker, a theatre maker.

**Mover:** Arts Makers please make a move and some noise. (*Arts Makers in the audience make a move and noise*.) Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you someone who teaches others to learn in and through dance, music, visual art, film, or theatre?

**Mover:** Arts Educators please make a move and some noise. (*Arts Educators in the audience make a move and noise.*) Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you someone who likes to see, hear, listen to, smell and taste dance, music, visual art, film, or theatre?

**Mover:** Arts Audiences please make a move and some noise. (*Arts Audiences in the audience make a move and noise*.) Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you someone who gives money or time or love to someone who makes, teaches or participates in dance, music, visual art, film, or theatre?

**Mover:** Arts Supporters please make a move and some noise. (*Arts Supporters in the audience make a move and noise.*) Thank you.

**Speaker:** Wow. That's a lot of moves and a lot of noise.

**Mover:** Yes. Even though we may be in different places...

*Beckham cross downstage right; Dawson crosses downstage left.*

**Speaker:** We share many common connections.

Connections are important. Because it's time. It's time that the makers, the educators, the audiences, and the supporters of art make a move and some noise. We need each body and every body to work together to create positive change.

Why? Because our world is an increasingly separate, polarised, and problematic place. We continue to have large scale conflicts in and between countries, and many people experience discrimination based on their body's ability, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class or sexual orientation. In our home country of the United States and in our home state of Texas, our current presidential administration's immigration policies has meant that over 2342 children have been separated from their parents at our border in the last eight weeks alone (Domonoske & Gonzales, 2018).

Dance and the Child International (daCi) and the World Dance Alliance recognise that our world is facing serious issues. Based on UNESCO's General Conference Resolution given at the Second World Conference on Arts Education, daCI produced the Copenhagen Declaration which "calls upon dance and other educators to explore ways to listen, to empower and mobilise young people around the world to contribute to sustainable development and an improved future for all ('*The Copenhagen Declaration'*, 2015).

We are pleased to share that a new Adelaide Declaration 2018 will be developed here at the Congress with the young people in attendance. This project will occur during our Youth Forums at Panpapanpayla and will be led by the SpringBoard youth leadership committee. The final document will be shared at the end of the Congress and signed by local conference and local leadership.

But, how does the international dance education community 'explore ways to listen, to empower and mobilise young people around the world'? How do we make a move, as a collective body of young people and adults, to create positive change in the world?

Today, we will explore how we can make a move in three specific ways.

1. Bodies Creating Social Change: First, we will explore through words and then movement, the power and potential of young people who use their bodies to create positive change in our global society.
2. Bodies Creating Educational Change: Next, we will explore through words and then movement, the power and potential of teachers and young people who use their bodies to create positive change in education.
3. Bodies Creating Personal Change: Finally, we will explore through words and then movement, the power and potential for you to use your body to create positive change in yourself and the world.

So, let's begin!

## Part One: Bodies Creating Social Change

If we look back, at our collective, world-wide history, many if not all our significant movements towards human equity and dignity, have been powered by young people.

Today's young people are often referred to as Generation Z. Generation Z is the term for people born after 1994.

Are you someone who was born after 1994? Generation Z, make a move and some noise. (*Audience responds)* That's about half our audience.

So, Generation Z, we've got a few things we want to confirm with you. Demographers, people who study changes in groups over time, describe Generation Z in specific ways. They say that Generation Z is:

1. Action Oriented – They often do some type of volunteering or support of others,
2. Values Driven – Generation Z wants to make the world a better place;
3. Impact Focused – Generation Z not only wants to make the world a better place, but they want to make it a better place through their own work and effort. ('Betting on Culture', 2018)

**Speaker:** So what do you think Generation Z?

**Mover:** Make a move and some noise, if one or more of these things describes you. (*Generation Z in audience makes a move and some noise*)

Generation Z does give us deep hope for the world. 51% of young people surveyed, in the same study we've been citing, also suggest that making a 'better world' literally means working towards 'world peace' ('Betting on Culture', 2018, p. 6). World Peace! It sounds good. But…how do we get there?

US Civil Right leader, Dr Martin Luther King Jr. suggested that true peace is not merely the absence of tension; rather, it is the *presence* of justice (1963, emphasis added). And this leads us back to our topic at hand. Bodies create social change because when a moment is shown in the body, it is present; it is undeniable. As artists who work in the body, you understand that when something is felt in the body, known through the body, it is something fully expressed and fully witnessed.

Generation Z is using this power, the power of the body, to help communicate the need for a more just, equitable, and 'better' world. Let's look at three different examples

## Bodies Working for Freedom

On Jan 28 2011, as part of the Arab Spring, young people went to Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt and led multiple anti-government, pro-democracy protests that eventually led to the removal of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak.

It was reported in the New York Times (2011), that the morning after the protests ended, throngs of Egyptian students and children took to the square wearing plastic gloves and carrying black plastic bags. When asked by a journalist what he was doing a young person answered: 'I am cleaning because this is my home…I am Egyptian again, not marginalised not without value or dignity. I feel like I have planted a tree. Now I need to look after it' ("18 Days in Tahrir").

Figure 1. Photograph of young people cleaning up Tahrir Square ('Letter from Kairo', 2011)

In this image we see young people creating a dance of reclamation; the presence of their bodies performing every day cleaning tasks are a powerful reminder that when something is really truly yours, you want it to be well cared for.

BODIES LINKED TOGETHER: In the state of Behar India, 69% of girls are married off to men before the age of 18. Parents often marry off their daughters at an early age so their dowries will cost less. Because child brides are so young when married, many of the girls lose opportunities to complete their education and some even face serious health problems or death during pregnancies and childbirth because of their age.

In January 2018, millions of people in Behar formed a 14,000 km, or 8000 miles-long, human chain to protest and raise awareness about child marriage as part of the 'Girls Not Brides' movement (TheirWorld, 2018).

Figure 2. Photograph of Indian students from Dedhsaiya Middle School forming part of the human chain against child marriage in Bihar (TheirWorld, 2018)

In this image, we see women and girls creating a dance of protest, the presence of their linked bodies demonstrates unity and defiance as they move together to protest child marriage.

ONE BODY STANDING FOR ALL. On March 24, 2018 school shooting survivor, Emma Gonzalez, a US High School Student in Parkland Florida, strode onto the stage at the March for Our Lives rally in the US capital in Washington D.C., an event she helped to organise.

Once on stage, Gonzalez listed the names of the seventeen students and staff gunned down at her high school in Parkland, Florida. And then she stood, silently.

Minutes ticked by. One minute. Two minutes. Three minutes. Four.

Emma stood silently for 6 minutes and 20 seconds, the same length of time that she spent crouched and hidden in a school room while a murderer carried out a shooting spree of many of her friends. Later, a journalist called it 'the loudest silence in the history of US social protest' (Berman, 2018).

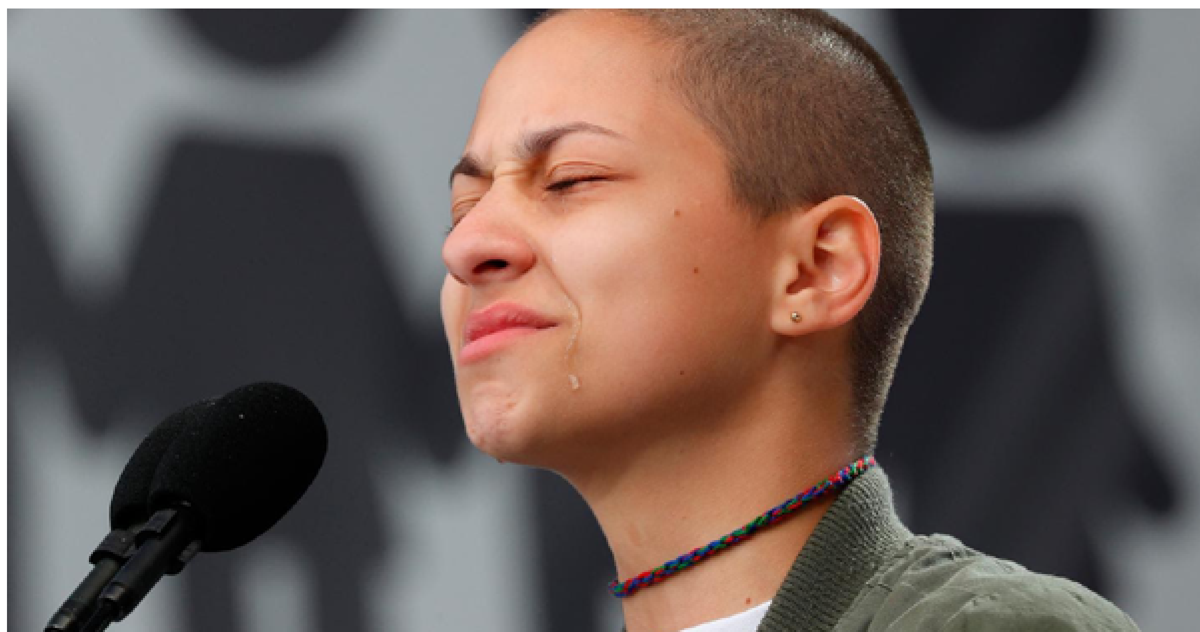


Figure 3. Emma Gonzalez at March for Our Lives (Lucero, 2018)

In this image we see a dance of stillness, the presence of Gonzales' body held and filled with fear in real time is a powerful reminder of the real, physical impact of gun violence in the US public schools.

In each of these examples

(*Speaker and Mover both move together silently recreating movements: (1) trash in the bag, (2) chain of hands, (3) Emma Gonzales stillness*)

young people understood the power of the body as a way to communicate the presence of and need for further action. They made a move to create positive social change.

*(Beckham steps forward to audience and addresses them directly)*

***Make A Move for Social Change – Embodied Reflection***

**Mover:** As Katie stated, we want to continue to move, create and reflect on what we just saw and heard and felt: what image or idea stands out to you about making a move for positive social change. We want you to move in ways that are pleasurable to your body, large or small. Pay attention to your breath while creating. Take a moment and explore that improvisation. Here's what listening to those stories meant to me. (*Beckham makes sweeping gestural movemen*t). You can work from my suggestion or make up your own. Now let's make a move for positive social change together: make a move, now.

*(Speaker and audience explore a reflective movement response while Mover observes and support. Mover signals an end to movement.)*

Remember your move. We will be collecting these moves to choreograph your change by the time we conclude our work together today, and we will be putting that into an improvised, possibly choreographed loop of movement.

**Speaker:** Thank you for reflecting, creating, and bringing your move of positive social change into this space.

In addition to his words on peace and presence, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. also reminds us that 'the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice' (p. 14, 1958).

We want to speak now to the teachers and parents and arts supporters in the room. The question is on us: How can we educate our Generation Z so that they develop the skills and perspectives to help us move towards a more just future? How do we do this when we know and when research suggests that our schooling systems are often not equitable.

An obvious place to start is to focus on the importance of the arts in education.

## Part Two: Bodies Creating Educational Change

(Dawson steps forward; Beckham steps back.)

When you hear the word 'art' or think about 'the arts', what comes to mind? Take a moment to think about it. When we ask people to define art we get very different answers. Some define art as an object—a drawing, sculpture or painting. Some say that the arts are performed—a play, a song, or a dance. Others talk about the creative process, the underlying thinking that goes into the creation of art by individuals or groups.

Laurie Polster, US visual artist and educator, suggests that these answers are all true. Polster states that 'At its core, art is creative expression, and art making is the process

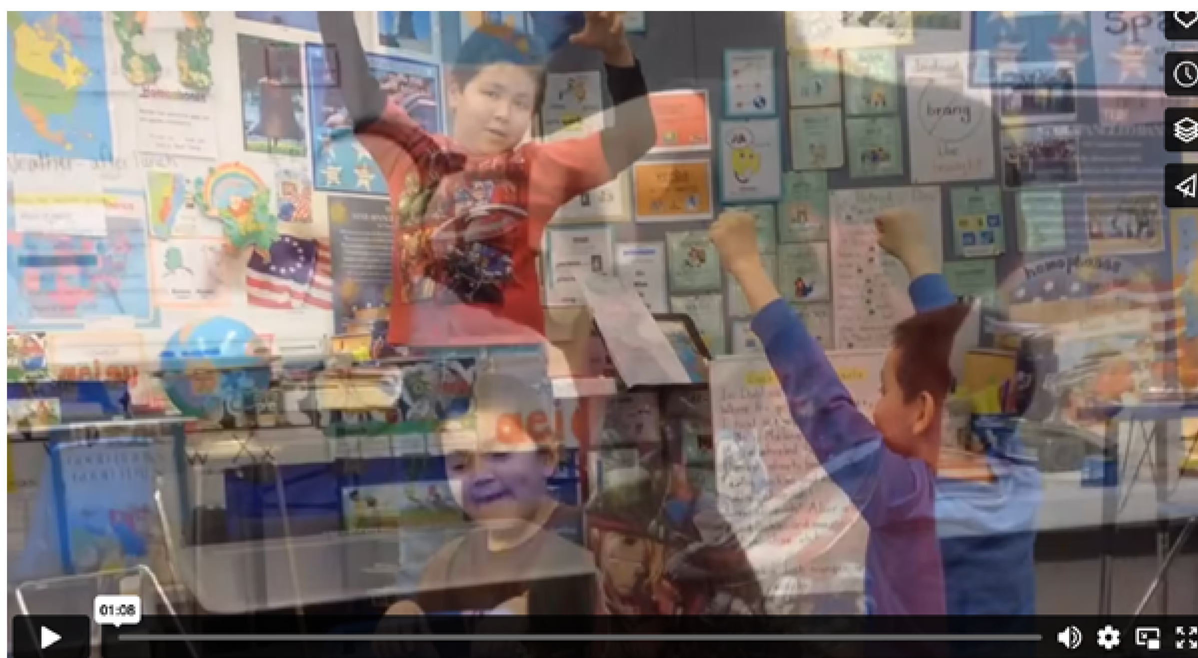
of that expression—the inquiry and engagement, research and experimentation, and growth and discovery' (p. 20–21).

As a trained theatre maker and an educator, I began my professional career asking: Can learning in and through the arts improve the quality of education for every child? I was very fortunate to find a community of elders, teachers, and students in the early years of my career, who also wanted to find an answer to this question.

### *Bodies Creating Educational Change: Alaska*

Sixty miles south of the Arctic Circle sits the tiny village of Galena, Alaska. Located on the northern bank of the Yukon River, the Koyukon Athabascan village is in the "bush" – which means if you want to get to Galena you travel by plane, boat, snow-go (the local term for a snow machine), or dog sled.

I started working in Galena's two schools as an annual visiting teaching artist in 1999. In 2004, when the community was devastated by three teen suicides within a month, the Tribal Council, the school leaders and I agreed to work together to see if we could use the arts to help kids in the village make more connections between who they are and what they were learning in schools. We spent two years developing a culturally responsive approach to teaching which used the arts as a central teaching tool. Here's an example of some of our work in literacy.




Video of Galena, Alaska: https://vimeo.com/386031839

Reflecting on the project afterwards, the Galena Principal shared, 'This work really helped to connect schools to our kids in a way that is expressive of our Native culture by allowing and praising movement to tell a story'. Over the past 15 years I've continued to build on my learning in Alaska through collaborations in communities across the world. Together, we've made a lot of discoveries!

**Academic**. In a large urban school district in the US, we found that working in the body helps students to explore and demonstrate their understanding of academic content.

Figure 4. A group of 8 and 9-year-old students work together in arts-integrated math lesson in a US classroom (Photo by Talleri McRea, Victoria, Texas.

This picture shows a group of year three students who were struggling to understand multiplication. The teacher stepped into role as a contractor who had been hired to lay tile in the principal's office; but, she didn't know how many tiles she would need! To help her solve the problem, the students decided to become the tile floor. They used their bodies to form the floor and count the tile squares to represent the multiplication problem and help their teacher out.

**Affective**. In a community on the border of Mexico, we found that working in the body helps students increase their sense of belonging, or the connection to one another, in the classroom.

Figure 5. A group of students engage in arts-integrated lesson in a US classroom (Photo by Kathryn Dawson, Tyler, Texas, 2005)

This picture was taken in a US primary classroom during a science lesson with ten and eleven year olds. The classroom teacher told me, when I went in the room that day to teach, that I should leave. She said that her 'difficult' students could not focus and that they had too many behavior problems to work with me today. Thirty minutes later I took this picture where you can see those same students laughing and positively collaborating as they used their bodies to explain how force works in the structural design of bridges.

**Aesthetic**. In my own university classroom, I have found that using our bodies to make physical representation of an abstract ideas helps my university students to deepen and demonstrate their understanding.

Figure 6. A group of university students engage in an arts-integrated lesson in a US classroom (Photo by Kathryn Dawson, Austin, Texas, 2011)

Here we see a group of university students using their bodies to analyse the author's arguments about the US response to Hurricane Katrina. As this frozen body image was shared, I saw my class make connections between the physical shapes and position of the bodies to ideas from the text. This process helped all of us have a deeper understanding of the article.

### *Bodies Creating Educational Change: Australia*

Which brings me to part of the reason I'm here with you today. Currently I'm in my fourth year of working with artists, educators, and researchers in South Australia, together we are trying to understand how creative body-based learning might increase student engagement in learning. One big aspect of our work involves young people leading the charge; so Generation Z, listen up because this is all about you.

Usually when we try to make schools better, people bring outside experts in to work with teachers, so that students do better, mostly on tests. But right now, in South

Australia, we are investigating what happens when students are the experts in a school change approach. In the Student Learning Communities (SLC) project, the students learn the arts-based approaches to learning, with their teachers, and then they co-design and co-lead the school improvement at their school. Here's a little bit about it:

Video of SLC Project in South Australia: https://vimeo.com/386038777

I must say that the possibilities in a model that brings together students, teachers and artists, to make a move together to change education are endless. I can't wait to see where this work will go in the future.

Andrea, that was a lot. Can I pass it back to you to reflect on bodies creating change in education?

*(Beckham steps forward; Dawson steps back.)*

### ***Make A Move for Educational Change – Embodied Reflection***

**Mover:** What does making a move towards a more inclusive, equitable and just education feel like in your body? Let's also consider using what you just saw on the video with Turn and Tableau, using a turn or a pose. Here's what listening to stories about educational change meant to me. *(Beckham makes a fluid movement)* You can work from my reflection or improvise your own move. Take a moment and explore that movement–small or large, fast or slow, stillness or release. Make it pleasurable. Now let's make our educational change move together: make your educational move, now.

Let's build a bit … Put this new move for educational change in your body right after the move for social change. We will be collecting these moves to choreograph your change by the time we conclude our work together today. Shall we try a social change movement, followed by educational

change movement, like improvised choreography? Make your move, now!

*(Dawson and audience explore their movement response to social and educational change while Mover observes and support. Mover signals an end to movement.)*

Remember your educational change move. We will continue to collect these moves as we go into our final investigation with Katie.

**Speaker:** Thank you for reflecting, creating, and bringing your moves of change into this space.

## Part Three: Bodies Creating Personal Change

*(Dawson steps forward; Beckham steps back.)*

As promised, we will use our last effort together to explore our power and potential to use the body to create positive, personal change in ourselves and in our world.

American writer and theologian Frederick Buechner (1995) writes that 'Your vocation, your life work, is "where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need' (p. 93).

One way to begin to access your personal power and potential to make change, is to take time to think about your deep gladness, or what we will call today: your core values. A core value is, quite literally, something that feels 'core' to who you are and what you believe. A core value is often the result of the intersection of our complex identities and our experiences. Core values function as our compass rose; they offer gut, heart, and mind guidance for our daily actions and decisions.

Here is a collection of core value words and phrases:

Figure 7. Collection of core value words

Look over the list and pick a word that is important, or core, to who you are.

If you don't see the right word for you, you are welcome to think of another word or image that speaks to you instead. Okay. Hopefully you've got a word.

We work with artists and teachers all over the world to help them to define their core values or beliefs. Why? Because understanding what matters to you often makes you a better artist, and teacher, and person.

### *Make a Move for Personal Change—Embodied Reflection*

*(Dawson and Beckham both step forward.)*

**Speaker:** For example, a core value for me is 'meaning'–at the heart of my work as an artist and teacher is that I want to make work that is as meaningful to others, as it is meaningful to me. So, whatever I do, I try to do work that gives people a variety of ways to make meaning.

Making meaning feels like this to me.

*(Dawson makes a move that represents meaning)*

**Mover:** Katie, my personal change move comes from a picture in my brain, an image of kindness.

*(Beckham makes a move that represents kindness)*

We are going to make a movement creating personal change using either an image or an idea that comes into your mind and body when you look for your own core values, or, perhaps this time you want to picture a word from Katie's list up there and use your body to illustrate that value, the way that Katie did with 'meaningful work'. So now take a quick moment to focus on a word, or an image of your own to improvise from; don't overthink it, go from your heart on this one. If you need to, feel free to borrow from Katie or me for today and do this improvisation on your own later. Okay! Let's make a move, now.

*(Dawson and audience explore their movement response to personal change while Mover observes and supports. Mover signals an end to movement.)*

### *Make Your Move for Social + Educational + Personal Change — Embodied Reflection*

**Mover:** Brilliant! We are ready for improvised choreography. Let's remember what we made, and what it felt like, and put them all together, making any transitions you need flow easily from one to another. We'll do each movement slowly, one at a time first.

Make your first move, for Social Change. Now.

*(Dawson and Audience make their move for social change.)*

Transition into your second move, for Educational Change. Now. Flow right into the newest one for Personal Change. Now. Pay attention to your breath.

*(Dawson and Audience make their move for Educational Change and then Personal Change. Music rises softly in volume and begins to fill the room.)*

Let's repeat those movements three in a row, make a loop of movements. As you move, hold all the thoughts and feelings from the images and words from today in your mind and in your body; make your movement meaningful—for you and for your world.

*(Audience, Dawson and Beckham continue to move together in silence, looping through their movements. Some audience members work together creating larger dance sequences that spill out across the fixed seats, into and above the aisles. As the room dances music fills the space.)*

Look for an ending in your movement then hold that ending with stillness.

Let's hold the final pose.  Inhale.  Exhale.

Thank you.

*(The audience takes their seat.)*

American educational theorist bell hooks (1994) once said 'The function of art is to do more than to tell it like it is – it is to imagine what is possible' (p. 281).

A child's foot doesn't know it's a foot yet. It could be a butterfly or an apple. This is why we must support our young people to make their move, we must support them to live a life filled with any possibility that they can imagine.

Makers, Educators, Audiences, and Supporters of Art, as you spend this wonderful week together at Panpapanpalya, we invite you to set an intention for how you will use the World Dance Congress as a place and space for social, educational and personal change.

It won't be hard. Every time we move together, we re-configure the world, and know each other differently.

So, we've already begun.

Thank you.

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## Biographies

**Associate Professor Katie Dawson** is appointed to the faculty of the University of South Australia and the University of Texas at Austin, where she also serves as director of the Drama for Schools program and as a Provost's Teaching Fellow. She is a nationally and internationally recognised consultant in creative learning and drama-based pedagogy. As a teaching artist, Dawson has facilitated trainings, presented workshops and given interactive keynotes at universities, professional conferences, arts organisations and community sites across the world. Her scholarship has appeared in numerous U.S journals and her two books have won international awards.

**Andrea Beckham** is a choreographer, dancer, educator. Her choreography has been presented in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Israel, and Australia. A principal dancer with Sharir Dance Company, she also toured with Wilson's Tallulah Dance

Company, briefly with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company in New York, and since 1989 has developed new work with her own pick-up company, Andrea Beckham Collaborative Dance. Andrea is teaching at The University of Texas at Austin, as well as running the Pilates-evolved Movement Laboratory there, and proudly received the Regents Outstanding Teaching Award.

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# Keynote address

## Tiny forces, tiny twists, tiny folds: Why dance is our first language

Sally Chance, independent dance artist, Artistic Director Sally Chance Dance
Delivered by Lisa Lanzi, independent dance, theatre and visual artist

### Abstract

Research suggests that dance as a communicative performing art form has its origins in the space of intersubjectivity between babies and their adults. Sharing intersubjective mindscapes (Stern, 1998) allows us to perceive the intentions of the people around us and to make visible our own, and this begins in the earliest months of life. I discuss how the "tiny forces, tiny twists, tiny folds...tiny little expressive wisdoms" (Dartnell, 2009) of this private domestic dialogue transmutes into formal theatrical encounter between adult performing artists and very young children, demonstrating how the participation of babies and very young children in live dance theatre makes visible their agency and capacity.

Keywords: Theatre for Early Years (TEY), Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), babies, young children, dance-theatre, participation, intersubjectivity

### Introduction

I respectfully acknowledge that *Panpapanpalya* and this session are taking place on the unceded lands of the Kaurna people.

A UK research project has discovered that during theatre performances audience members' hearts beat at the same time. Furthermore, people close to one another – couples and friends – continue to enjoy this cardiac companionability through the interval and beyond (University College London, 2017).

I think we all know intuitively that in situations – like dancing together – that cause bodies to synchronise in this way, people are more likely to bond and to like each other. The hope is that this has been your experience of *Panpapanpalya* so far and that it continues in today's keynote session, which aims to show how the pleasure not only of embodied connection but of participation in the time-based art forms has its origins in the interactions between babies and their adults, and to suggest that this is one of the reasons why babies and very young children are pretty competent when it comes to cultural participation.

## How I came across Theatre for Early Years

In 2001, alone in the office of South Australia's children's arts festival, I was a few hours into my very first day as its artistic director. With no idea how and where to begin I began to sift through a huge pile of highly glossy brochures designed to pitch performances to festival directors. I came across a project directed by Christine de Smedt for Ghent-based company Les Ballets C de la B, now known as laGeste in a collaboration with kabinet k (laGeste, 2022). At the time, the company ran an annual project called *9x9* involving representatives of a specific community in making a performance piece.

This is the image I found:

Figure 1. 9x9, Les Ballets C de la B, image retrieved from dpklinik.de/kkk/img/DeSmedt3.jpg

Take a moment to consider this image.

What do you notice?

I noticed how incredibly tender and somehow private it is; how it has such performative coherence; how the ensemble seems to be breathing as one; how willing the adults are to be very physical and to move at floor level, and how securely the babies seem to be going with the momentum of their movement. I wondered what the babies were wondering.

This image ignited a train of thought for me about the very notion that babies could have a cultural life. Some years later, I contacted Christine and learned that the parent-baby 9x9 project had several seasons between 2000 and 2005, with different casts, in a number of European cities. This impressed me as an incredible feat of logistical complexity and cultural bravery at a time when babies were not considered cultural contributors at all. I began to be fascinated by the possibility of finding formal performance forms to respond to this cultural need. On resuming my independent

dance practice in 2007 I began to focus on creating performance that would respond to the youngest of audiences.

For me, Theatre for Early Years (TEY) is “a professionally-created theatrical experience for an audience of children aged from birth to around three years old, accompanied by carers” (Fletcher-Watson, 2016, p.2). This definition highlights the artistic professionalism of TEY, differentiating it from other more socially orientated early years experiences, and covers the child age range involved in my own practice. I should also note here that the term ‘theatre’ is conventionally used in the field of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) to cover all verbal and non verbal performing arts forms, including circus, opera, comedy and, of course, dance.

As I entered the field of TEY my earliest discovery was that young children’s cultural lives are inextricably linked to their emotional and social needs because babies form their sense of the world and who they are within relationship. In other words, babies need to notice that the adults around them are noticing them and so I feel that TEY has a responsibility to be a meeting point between performers and children, to create the conditions for encounter, so that the performers – and the very structure and fabric of the performance itself – lets the children know and feel that their presence has an influence on the exchange; that there is reciprocity. My independent company, Sally Chance Dance, (dancers Stephen Noonan and Felecia Hick and musician/composer Heather Frahn) summarises this ethos with the words “I see you seeing me”.

Figure 2. I See You Seeing Me – *Nursery*, 2018

Here, I gratefully acknowledge that this phrase was proffered by Stephen (pictured above). It encapsulates the spirit of our company’s work with its emphasis on the two-way nature of the encounter and the reciprocity of our ethos where the ‘I’ is the adult performer as much as the child.  Young children demand the kind of response referred to by dancer Liz Lerman when she wrote (in a wholly other context):

> I had to focus on the people I was performing for. I couldn’t pull the

> modern dance stare or the inner-directed movement gaze. They demanded a relationship with the dancer. I found this intriguing, challenging and difficult. And I felt it a worthwhile problem to solve. (2011, p.10)

TEY creates a context in which babies get to showcase the sophisticated ways in which they read the intentions of the people around them, notice feeling tones and interactions and actively invite the input of adults and other babies, all within and through the languages of movement and sound. From the point of view of our preferred participatory theatrical form TEY scholar Ben Fletcher-Watson notes, 'with … recognition of the roles that very young children can play in theatre, participation becomes not an interruption of the theatrical moment but vital to its success' (2013, p. 19), while theatre practitioner Geesche Wartemann cuts to the chase with the challenging and interesting view that in their quest for social connectedness 'it is the children themselves who make the convention of the fourth wall ridiculous' (2009, p. 7). We Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) practitioners are no strangers to our work having twin social and aesthetic goals, in which having a high opinion of children matches the high level rigour of our artistic work. In their first report on *Starcatchers*, at the time Scotland's theatre for early years pilot project and now an influential early years arts organisation, Susan Young and Nikki Powers stated that 'childhood is … seen as valuable in its own right, not merely a preparation for adulthood, and children are considered to be active agents in the making of their own lives even from birth' (2008, p. 7). Contemporary TYA therefore rejects the idea both that practitioners are somehow constrained artistically when creating performance work for children and that the children themselves are the passive recipients of performance works. Rather, TYA works robustly within a construct of childhood that recognises the completeness of their being at all stages of their young lives. One of the practitioners at the forefront of early years work in the mid-eighties was Roberto Frabetti, who began a process of overturning deficit perceptions of young children by using his practitioner experience to show how children's observable behavioural choices, often non-verbally expressed, indicate an aesthetic sensibility. He relates for example how, within a two-day artist residency in an early years education and care setting, the children's responses to him showed their clear understanding of the distinction between the informality of day one, where he attended as 'himself' as a secure adult and creative play-fellow in contrast with the heightened quality of day two, where he was in role as a performer (2009, p. 142).

Cognitive science has been a useful ally in promoting the status of babies and very young children. Writing in the journal Scientific American, psychologist and philosopher Alison Gopnik bluntly states, 'People still often think of children as defective adults' (2010, p. 76). She goes on to describe how 'far from being mere unfinished adults, babies and young children are exquisitely designed by evolution to change and create, to learn and explore' (2010, p. 81), because humans have a much longer childhood than any other species, allowing us to enjoy a time of being totally cared for in order to learn about our environment. All this learning requires babies' brains to be more plastic than adult brains. The brain region peculiar to humans, called the prefrontal cortex, takes an especially long time to mature allowing for young people to enjoy an uninhibited window of mental space that is so crucial to figuring

out the world. Controlled adult skills of planning and organising are governed by the pre-frontal cortex and depend on childhood's extended period of learning. The process of wiring and re-wiring involved in this area of the brain may still be in full swing right into a young human adult's mid-20s.

As Gopnik summarises, 'Our most valuable human accomplishments are possible because we were once … dependent children and not in spite of it. Childhood, and caregiving, is fundamental to our humanity' (2010, p. 81).

## An elaborate dance

Research suggests that dance as a communicative performing art form has its origins in the ways in which babies interact playfully with their adults (Dissanayake, 2000; Malloch, 2005; Stern, 2010).

Stephen Malloch has worked for many years observing dialogues between mothers and their babies. As Malloch notes, babies are sensitive to 'a narrative of gestures' (2005, p. 17) where 'the affect of a vocal and/or bodily gesture is attuned to by another' carrying 'emotional meaning for both participants' (2005, p. 19). Adult-baby conversations whether verbal or non-verbal tell a little story, describing the here and now between them. It's important that there's a 'fit' between both participants' gestures, words, sounds and facial expressions in real time. The dialogue must be authentic, because babies know if the adult side of the conversation isn't a real response to their offer. And let's not assume that the adults direct the conversation. As American scholar Ellen Dissanayake notes, babies 'elicit, shape, and otherwise influence the pace, intensity, and variety of signals that adults direct to them' (2017, p. 151). Malloch describes this as a 'shaping of time' together (2005, p.25). When everyone is tuned in there is a companionable feeling akin to the experience of those theatre goers in London in 2017.

Psychiatrist Daniel N. Stern took the idea of shaping the time and space between adult and baby further into the concept he terms 'vitality contours' (2010). These allow a wonderful process called "affect attunement" (Stern, 2010, p.41) to take place. This is where the two people in the dialogue share the *quality* of the feeling between them by reflecting each other, offering versions of each other's offers, rather than being engaged in precise mimicry. (Exact mimicking would more likely be disconcerting than companionable.) A good example is where the baby makes a sound and the adult reflects it with a gesture, such as lifting and lowering their head to match a rising and falling sound from the baby. When this happens the moment shares a vitality contour. Stern's concept, in in keeping with Malloch's sense of a mutual shaping of time, is that the time-based art forms originate in the rhythms, resonances and emotional tone of adult-baby intersubjective templates and 'move us by the expressions of vitality that resonate in us' making up 'the matrix of experiencing other people and feeling their vitality' (Stern, 2010, p.4). Earlier in his practice Stern used art forms as a metaphor for human intersubjective experience, describing for example his observation that 'the mother-infant interaction seemed to be an elaborate dance choreographed by nature' (2002, p. 3). Later in his writing he delved explicitly into dynamic forms of vitality as

a composite human experience, starting with movement and integrating with four theoretically separate experiences of time, force, space and directionality or intention (2010, pp. 3–4). He calls this a 'fundamental dynamic pentad', concluding elegantly that it 'applies to the inanimate world as we observe it, to interpersonal relationships as we live them, and to the products of culture as we experience them' (2010, pp. 6–7), citing for example how dance 'sweeps us up at moments and then releases us, only to sweep us up again quickly just downstream' (2010, p.6).  Stern also notes, 'without vitality forms there could not be the exquisite fine-tuning of interpersonal interactions, nor creative artistic interpretations' (2010, p. 51).

In her analysis of the 'elaborate dance' between adult and baby (where fathers and other carers are also of course just as important), Dissanayake makes a link between the things adults do to engage babies and the kinds of compositional techniques that a performing artist might apply to their material. She calls these 'operations' (2017, p.153) and lists them as follows: simplification, repetition, exaggeration (with the goal of making something more conspicuous) and elaboration or dynamic variation. Going further, Dissanayake mentions that repetition also makes possible a fifth operation, manipulation of expectation to bring about the pleasure of surprise (2017, p.153).

All of this means that, according to Malloch, 'dance and music are particular cultural substantiations of this need to share sympathetically with others' (2005, p.25). Dissanayake refers to this as 'a reassuring feeling of *oneheartedness*' (2017, p. 159, my italics) – just like those people attending the West End show in London.

It's tempting to see anything to do with babies as quite intimate and domestic, for domestic read invisible. But how this private dialogue turns into a formal theatrical encounter is perhaps best made visible by the relatively new field of Theatre for Early Years. Or as I might take the opportunity to say: Dance-Theatre for Early Years.

The field of Theatre for Young Audiences uses the word 'theatre' to encompass dance, as well as other performance forms, but let's not get too fussed about appearing to privilege theatre as babies are anyway wholly uninterested in these kinds of distinctions! Having said that, dance has of course a natural affinity with very young pre-verbal children, who bring embodied skills, sensory awareness and corporeal communication to their engagement with live performance. In their enquiry into audience experiences of watching dance, Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds state that, 'audience experiences of dance can… be conceptualised most prominently in terms of what has been described as kinesthetic empathy' (2010, p. 49). Like McKechnie, Grove and Stevens' Unspoken Knowledges project (1999 – 2008) here in Australia, of which Malloch's chapter forms an element, the UK-based Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy project focuses on adult audiences, but its research participants' emphasis on the kinaesthetic pleasures and empathetic experiences afforded by attending dance links beautifully to very young audiences' socio-cultural experience of live performance. TEY practitioner, Gerd Taube, also describes the features of the practice in attuned and embodied terms, noting for example, that 'the rhythm of the players and the spectators is connected by the breath' (2009, p. 24) and that TEY is a meeting point between audiences and performers in which 'the spectator opens himself to the presence of another being' (2009, p. 20) through

a ‘physicalness of perception’ (2009, p. 19). Several of these ideas link to the field of somatics. Choreographer and scholar, Emilyn Claid, describes somatic practice as ‘sensing encounters between body and breathing, body and ground, body and body and between body and site’ (2016, p. 124). She extends such encounters to the interpersonal with her description of a ‘three way dynamic of relationship: separateness, relatedness and in-between-ness’ (2016, p. 116). Perhaps this three-way dynamic is inherent within TEY, as baby, parent and performer negotiate the relational nature of the performance.

Many practitioners, myself included, are interested in making visible the agency of the children in their own right.

Figure 3. Nursery – image courtesy of ArtPlay, Melbourne

This absolutely depends on each child’s security, hence the necessary presence of the children’s adults at all times. However for parents their child’s autonomous artistic choices are sometimes a surprise or even a revelation. Writing on *Oogly Boogly*, his 2003 work for babies aged 12 – 18 months, dancer Guy Dartnell describes how the work builds with a small number of dancers following and amplifying the babies’ movements or stillnesses, while their adult carers are encouraged simply to witness events, without explicitly encouraging their children, or indeed discouraging them. He goes on to detail the babies’ embodied choices, such as ‘tiny forces, tiny twists, tiny folds, budges, trembles, bounces, utterances’ (2009, p. 3), noting that they’re not afraid to repeat their choices many times, ‘allowing the experience to grow and sink in’ to their bodies (2009, p. 3). Dartnell describes these as the babies’ ‘tiny little expressive wisdoms’ suggesting that this is evidence of “intelligent independence displayed in many tiny ways” (2009, p. 3). The manifestation of independence in a very young child may be usefully re-framed in terms of the security of their attachment to a primary carer. So I think it’s worth emphasising strongly one more time that a pre-requisite for the acquiring and displaying of such competencies in a baby is the close loving presence of secure adults.

This is familiar territory for my company, who presented *Nursery*, one of our works for babies aged 4 – 18 months, on Tuesday at Adelaide College of the Arts. I thank them wholeheartedly for going ahead with this opportunity to be involved in Panpapanpalya. *Nursery* includes a section we call 'matching,' akin to the approach taken in *Oogly Boogly* and described beautifully by dance critic, Alan Brissenden on Radio Adelaide's Arts Breakfast show:

> One of the most memorable moments for me was seeing Stephen Noonan stretched out on the floor eyeballing a four or five month-old who had crawled out to meet him. It epitomised the interaction which *Nursery* seemed to me to aim for, and abundantly achieve. (Brissenden 2018)

Very young children's engagement in live performance is sophisticated, nuanced and complex – and certainly doesn't require their actual physical interaction. Babies are quite capable of being beautifully focused audiences, sitting together, intent on the show. My notes from the April season of *Nursery* at Festival 2018, the cultural event held on the Gold Coast in association with the Commonwealth Games, recall an exquisite image of three little heads all turning in unison and in the same direction throughout the show. This trio of very young children could sit independently, but stayed clustered for most of the show, rather than travelling out to the action and back in to the secure base of their adults. I felt that their shared engagement, their togetherness within the show, their being-ness within the audience, helped them enjoy the experience.

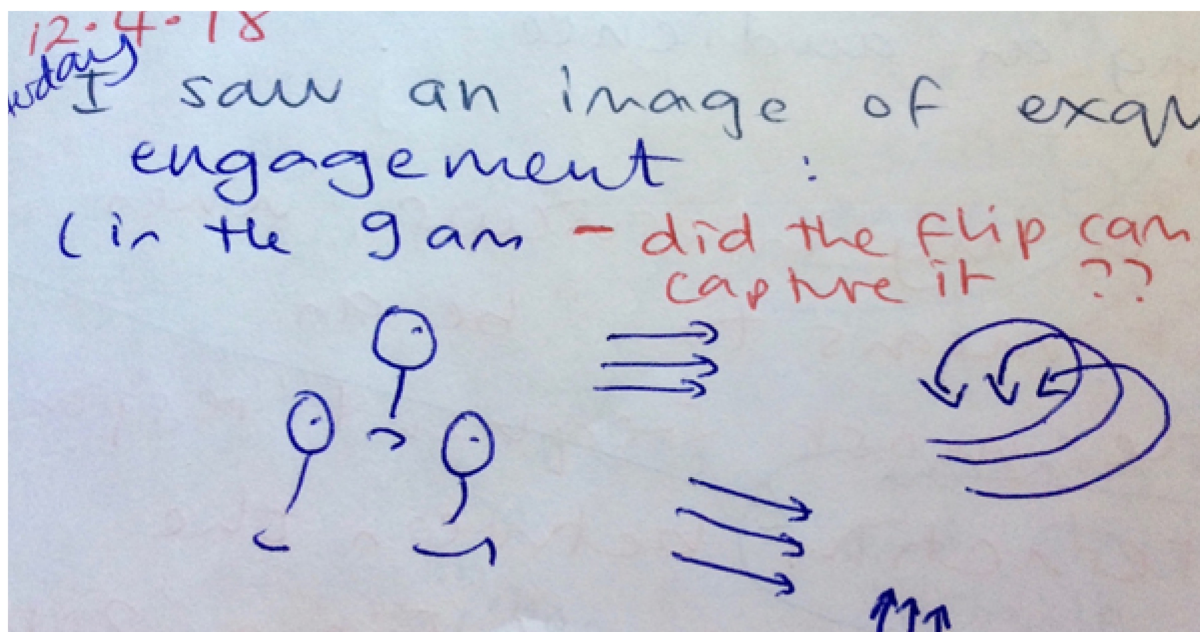


Figure 4. *Three little heads*, Reflective practice journal, 12 April 2018

The very word 'engagement' contains a massive number of layers. Alan Brissenden again:

> The basic choreography and music remain the same for every performance, but what is so wonderful about this kind of theatre is that the audience participation is always fresh, always different, dependent on the children's

> different stages of development. A fourteen-month old near me decided it wasn't really for him, and turned around to carry out his own explorations behind us. A little girl about three would begin to participate, but was mature enough to be satisfied with a bit, go away and do her own little dance, then come back for the next bit. But it seemed to me that everyone in the circle was absorbed and involved. (2018)

During the April season I began my own list of types of engagement responses, as follows:

- Coming in to look closely at the performance action, then moving quickly back to the secure base of their adult
- Coming in to the performance action but doing so as more of a boundary-pushing game with their adult
- Coming in and staying a while, often for a long while, sitting or lying quite comfortably watching the performance
- Investigating the set and design objects and often the performers themselves by touching, pulling and weight sharing
- Wanting/grabbing the design objects or instruments
- Sitting inside a large prop
- Returning to the show after investigating the rest of the space – seating, miniscule bits of fluff, the technician, the exit, other families and so on
- Returning to the show from distress or insecurity.

The two most visible responses consisted of intense gazing whilst sitting with their adult, and moving into the action to take part.

A further type of response to *Nursery* indicated disengagement. Disengagement manifested as retreat – looking or moving away temporarily from the performative action, as distraction – engaging with other babies in a way that was removed from the world of the show (as opposed to the category 'sharing') and as rupture – discomfort and distress (fussing or crying). The latter arose primarily from factors within the baby, usually unpleasant physiological sensations, such as teething, tired-ness or hunger. TEY 'performers acknowledge children's right to be present, and more importantly, to withdraw when they wish' (Fletcher-Watson, 2016, p.9). Furthermore, 'behaviours of re-engagement' (Fletcher-Watson, 2016, p.9) can have an important function within the theatrical exchange, arguably akin to the intersubjective concept of 'rupture and repair' (Cooper, Hoffmann, Marvin, and Powell, 2019, Circle of Security©) used by attachment theorists to describe an aspect of the parent-child relationship, where after the inevitability of disagreement the relationship is actually made stronger by a positive process of resolution. My company members and I have to be alive to the inevitability of disengagement at times, but this is always an interesting moment, the potential for thinking it through afterwards being revealing of things that can only help and develop our work.

I have two examples, which I hope will help describe this. The first is a rehearsal situation of disengagement, which made it clear to me once and for all that babies are capable of sustained engagement as audiences.

In preparation for a tour to Perth's Awesome Festival two new dancers needed to learn *Nursery*. We had one rehearsal day in Adelaide and opted for the original and new casts to work together in the morning, with the new cast continuing to work in the afternoon (and the next day in Perth). At 4pm that afternoon a small trial audience came to join us. We had only reached a certain point in our rehearsal, but we paused and took it from the top. The babies were engaged until the precise moment when we'd run out of rehearsal time. Clearly the babies noticed and felt when the performers' temporary lack of familiarity interrupted the affective intention of the show.

The second example arose from a glitch in communication, which meant that instead of 20 babies, each with their adults, attending the show our audience involved 40 babies, each with their adults. Somehow the show still worked, but the babies' attention was split quite dramatically between the show itself and all the many other babies. I felt that not having optimal numbers meant that the babies didn't fully have the chance to showcase the quality of their attention. However, the company noticed that these babies weren't as tired at the end of the show. This suggested to us that the show is a deeper experience but harder work for the babies when the optimal number is present, and that they show this by tiring towards the end, whereas the one off experience for us of managing huge audience numbers showed us that the babies seemed to surf the experience with a bit more stamina, albeit more superficially, although on the up side they maintained their energy through to the end.

This points back to the philosophical ideal among contemporary TYA practitioners that our work positions children as active collaborators in the theatrical exchange and links to Matthew Reason's idea that the rigour of our work must flow from 'our perception of the abilities and nature of young people as an audience and of our *ambitions* for that audience' (Reason, 2010, p. 36, my italics).

In wrapping up, my hope is that I've shown that babies and very young children have capacities that are showcased within the heightened space of a live performance and that to again quote TEY pioneer, Suzanne Osten, an audience of babies is: 'Present. Here and now…Free from conventions…Receptive without bias or prejudice. Clearly awake: eyes wide open. Responsive in body, soul and with the senses. Responds in honesty. The ideal audience is a baby!' (2008, p. 1).

It's been wonderful to be involved in Panpapanpalya, albeit at this unexpected long distance. I thank my friend and colleague Lisa Lanzi for delivering this presentation with such consummate vocal skill, and I thank and congratulate Jeff Meiners and his team for the feat of energy and vision that is Panpapanpalya and will continue to be for several more gorgeous days.

I also thank my company members, Stephen, Felecia, Heather and Cinzia, for presenting *Nursery* at Panpapanpalya in my absence. It's an honour and a tremendous

responsibility to have as the tools of our company's trade that subtle sense of shared communication, which all of us are capable of feeling from the moment our lives begin.

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## Biography

**Sally Chance** works at the interface between community cultural development and artform development in dance, with and for babies and very young children. Sally was founding Artistic Director of Restless Dance Theatre (1991 – 2001) and is an experienced teaching artist, working in the early years as a dance artist in residence. Sally developed the practice of *Dance Play* in the field of perinatal infant mental health and received a 2007 Australia Council Fellowship. Making visible the cultural lives of babies and very young children with her independent company, Sally Chance Dance, her performance works have made pioneering contributions to the field of Theatre for Early Years (TEY). Sally's practice-led doctoral study focused on dance-theatre as an encounter between performers and young children in the company of their adults.

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# Panpapanpalya 2018: dance, gathering, generations, learning: an overview

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## Abstract

This paper introduces ‘Panpapanpalya 2018’, the 2nd Joint World Dance Congress of two voluntary organisations: dance and the Child international (daCi) and the World Dance Alliance (WDA) Global Education Network. Gathering in Adelaide, state capital of South Australia from 8 to 13 July 2018, over 900 participants from 26 countries met to dance and learn at this event. The paper explains first how the congress was realised over three years. Consideration is given to complexities in hosting by a university key partner along with other stakeholders’ involvement towards a successful event that brought international attention to Adelaide in a one-off cultural event. Next, an overview of congress content provides detail of the activities for the Panpapanpalya 2018 themes: dance, generations, gathering, learning. Post conference evaluative statistical data is subsequently presented to inform plans for future conferences, concluding with remarks regarding the lasting legacy of the congress.

## Introduction

The title Panpapanpalya, a local Aboriginal Kaurna language word for ‘conference’, honoured Australia’s rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance practices and was the name given to the 2nd Joint World Dance Congress of two voluntary organisations: dance and the Child international (daCi) and the World Dance Alliance (WDA) Global Education Network. The name was suggested following consultation with the elders of the native peoples on whose land the congress was held. The world dance congress Panpapanpalya 2018 respected Indigenous knowledges, welcoming First Nations people from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Africa, Canada, Taiwan and the Pacific Islands.

This was the 14th daCi conference, the second time that Australia had hosted a daCi conference (in Sydney, NSW 1994) and the second time the organisations had collaborated, the first being in Taiwan 2012. Following the success of the previous Taiwan 2012 joint congress, the two organisations daCi and WDA came together again. The aims of the 2018 congress were to maximize connections for dance educators from both organisations and to strengthen networks. This time, WDA’s

Education and Training Network worked with daCi to create a weeklong congress with a focus on dance learning across the lifespan.

The event was hosted by the University of South Australia (UniSA) with generous in-kind support from the School of Education within the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences. This highlights the key role that universities can play in supporting the advocacy work of voluntary organisations such as daCi and WDA.

A proposal submitted to daCi Executive Committee (EC) and Advisory Board (AB) in early 2015 provided a contextual statement, with detail outlining collaborating hosting organisations, financial arrangements for funding and in-kind support, communication and marketing, along with organising committee plans. The proposal included location information and rationale, purposes, aims and goals for the conference. After acceptance of the proposal, a presentation was made to the EC and AB at the Denmark 2015 conference in Copenhagen. This was planned collaboratively.

A series of local planning meetings were held late 2015 and early 2016. These meetings sought to engage dance-interested members of the community from Adelaide and beyond more widely across Australia in the proposal for Adelaide to host a voluntarily led congress in three years. The anticipated number was for 800 delegates based on similar events held in Taiwan (approximately 1400 participants in 2012) and Denmark (approximately 700 participants in 2015). The many Adelaide meetings throughout late 2015 varied in attendance from around 10 to 30 people with scoping activities carried out to plan for the program and to prepare for a daCi EC & AB interim meeting held in July 2016 in Adelaide. Seed funding from daCi of CAN$6000 was used to support this meeting which was attended by the Executive Committee and several National Representatives as Advisory Board members. The presence of international members at this meeting was significant in seeking the support of the University of South Australia and TAFE (Tertiary and Further Education) South Australia as key partner stakeholders for hosting a congress. At this point, a congress coordinator was recruited to work closely with the convenor.

Subsequently, a university steering group was established for the convenor and coordinator to report to, thereby monitoring the planning progress. This planning was supported by many key staff members from different UniSA departments along with others at TAFE whose roles embraced related tasks. Working in the unknown territory of planning an international conference elicited considerable generosity and enthusiasm as well as creative problem-solving and negotiation skills to ensure success. The plans proceeded mostly unhindered and, although some disappointing blocking challenges relating to venue use were encountered, these were ultimately resolved satisfactorily.

Important work at this time was the development of the congress website, funding applications to support various aspects of the congress (Opening and Closing events, artistic program) as well as monthly financial management led by a voluntary accountant from the local community and supported by UniSA's School of Education. Generous funding was provided for the artistic program by the state's key arts and cultural organisation, Arts South Australia, along with the City of Adelaide

which funded the Opening Event. Whilst funding for artists fees was sought from the Australia Council for the Arts, none was forthcoming which is indicative of the difficulties inherent in such initiatives by international organisations seeking funding support from national organisations.

In addition, UniSA developed a detailed Collaboration Agreement for the university host, daCi and WDA. This was regarded by the organisation leaders as a key document and exemplar for similar future events as it outlined clear guidance for potential numbers of participants, with estimated costs and a budget with possible profit and loss scenarios.

From the end of 2016 through to July 2018 numerous local meetings were held to plan for the congress, reflecting the wide support provided by local and interstate volunteers.

## The Panpapanpalya 2018 program

### *Opening event*

The congress began on the Sunday 8th July 2018 late afternoon with participants collecting their program, bag and small welcome gifts from the Adelaide Town Hall, with T-shirts for purchase. The Opening event was curated by Artistic Director Deon Hastie from Kurruru Arts and Culture Hub and began outdoors with delegates of all ages gathering under a Southern hemisphere winter sunset in Tarntanyangga (Victoria Square). This reflects the name Tarntanya (red kangaroo place) given to this place by the Kaurna people, the original custodians of the land.

The organisers planned that the congress would begin with an informal gathering in the open air. Individuals and groups of young people arrived, many carrying flags and emblems from their countries, some meeting for the first time and others excitedly greeting people they had met at similar previous events. Participants were provided with a taste of locally sourced warming Indigenous soup and bread (damper) along with contemporary Aboriginal music, followed by a traditional Welcome to Kaurna Country smoking ceremony led by Aboriginal Elders.

Everyone was then guided by volunteers and 'yidarki' players to a formal welcome in Adelaide Town Hall, built in 1866, after the founding of the British colony in 1836 by the surveyor-general of the incipient colony, William Light. The name Adelaide honoured the wife and queen of King George IV. As an iconic symbol of colonial power, the Town Hall provided a warmer location for the darker evening yet reminded congress delegates of the complex and contested history of Australia. The congress took place in the context of public interest in "truth telling" about past colonial injustices. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that Australia's population is over 25 million, with First Nations peoples one of the world's oldest continuous cultures estimated to be well over 60,000 years (Klein, 2018).

From the Town Hall stage, the congress convenor welcomed participants, acknowledging the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains with the words:

> We acknowledge and respect the Kaurna people, their continuing culture, their link to this land, and their Elders, past, present and future.
>
> We welcome you and thank the Elders of Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi for the congress name 'Panpapanpalya'.

This was followed by further welcoming to South Australia and the City of Adelaide at the Town Hall by the Governor Hieu Van Le and Deputy Mayor Cllr Sandy Vershoor who echoed the words of the Lord Mayor Martin Haese:

> I wish you a warm welcome to the City of Adelaide; one of the world's most liveable cities. We are excited to be hosting Panpapanpalya 2018, and I congratulate the organising committee for preparing an informative and insightful congress. As a thriving and welcoming multi-cultural city with a vibrant arts and creative culture, delegates will find inspiration, and a reason to dance, around every corner.

Similarly, the welcome words from the program by South Australian Premier Stephen Marshall were reflected as follows:

> South Australia has a long and illustrious history of creating bold, contemporary dance. This week I welcome you to add a new chapter to that story: from experiencing our rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance culture, and developing new networks, thoughts and ideas for dance learning and teaching, to witnessing how dance and medicinal science can intertwine in new and innovative ways in the surrounds of Adelaide's world-leading Health and Biomedical Precinct.

Responses from the international collaborating organisations were made by President of World Dance Alliance Asia-Pacific (WDA-AP) Urmimala Sarker (India) and dance and the Child international (daCi) Chair Maria Speth (The Netherlands). Garry Stewart, Artistic Director of the concurrent inaugural Adelaide Dance Festival also welcomed guests as Panpapanpalya 2018 coincided with the inaugural Adelaide Dance Festival. Congress delegates were granted discounts to selected events, including performances by Lina Limosani Projects, the Australian Ballet and Australian Dance Theatre. As Peter Louca, Executive Director, Arts South Australia, a key congress funding partner, wrote:

> It is thrilling that this year's congress will see a partnership with the inaugural Adelaide Dance Festival – two dynamic events that offer a chance for all to engage with and participate in dance, hear from international practitioners, and see some of the best contemporary and classical dance this country has to offer. Panpapanpalya offers something for everyone: from professional dancers and choreographers right through to those of us with two left feet. (Panpapanpalya 2018 program)

Dance education globally has an ongoing history of re-enforcing the colonial narrative and Panpapanpalya 2018 provided an opportunity to present international delegates with a taste of the diversity of First Nations dance in Australia. Displaced often violently, Aboriginal people were, from the start, forced to submit to colonial rule and cultural practices, experiencing deep loss of sovereign rights to land, family, and cultural practices including their own languages and education practices. Hence most Aboriginal people and increasing numbers of non-Indigenous citizens regard Britain's colonisation as an invasion and dispossession (Creative Spirits, 2015; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003, cited in Rowlands, McGill & Meiners, 2022).

In earlier discourse around Aborigines, homogenous labelling categorised kinship groups together (Bern & Dodds, 2000). However, mainland Aboriginal peoples identify with numerous languages and mainland "countries" of origin established prior to colonisation (Creative Spirits, 2015). These countries include cultural traditions with distinctive dances. The event was thus planned to enable delegates to experience the culture and traditions of widely ranging First Nation peoples of Australia, challenging perceptions of an homogeneous Aboriginal dance in order to develop a richer understanding of Australia's ancient foundations.

Next, a series of sharing stories were presented from Kaurna dance group Taikurtinna, Uncle Major Moogy Sumner of the Ngarrindjeri Dance Group, Wagana Aboriginal Dancers from the Blue Mountains of New South Wales and students of Kurruru Arts and Culture Hub with Uncle Eddie Peters.

The presentation reflected the work of Kurruru Arts and Culture Hub which provides high quality creative support to children and young people in the Aboriginal community. Kurruru leads a community spirited environment that supports the maintenance of living cultural practices, and creates access to projects which support the inclusion and visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the public arts landscape.

Delegates learned about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia with a multi-media projection funded by the Adelaide City Council incorporating the Aboriginal map, animated images, music and a narrated storyline with examples from across Australia. Over sixty First Nations performers from South Australian and interstate companies presented traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances. This Town Hall opening culminated with a memorable mass interactive finale led by Artistic Director Deon Hastie and performers inviting all audience members to dance with specially commissioned music by the local Indigenous band Electric Fields.

### ***Program overview***

The congress program was designed to enable participants to follow interests and themes from the beginnings of dance in the early years through the different stages of school and further education – and beyond through life to the joys and challenges of dancing in later years with wisdom and changing bodies. Many brought snapshot performances to showcase on the first two evenings and there were other chances

to perform in 'Pop-Up' dances and a 'BigDance'. There were opportunities to gather and dance, to network, share and develop knowledge in Creative Gatherings, Young People's Gatherings and Twinning projects. In addition, Teachers' Gatherings and Scholarly Gatherings focused on more academic dance study.

Evaluative comments reflected varying responses to the full program, for example the comment… so much to choose from… could have had less content with repeat opportunities to access things, contrasted with the response… More workshops and dance flavours. Otherwise very well organized.

An important suggestion for future conferences was:

> …would be advantageous in my opinion (and that of some colleagues) to have a mission control base throughout the event, where the participants could visit with the many and various ongoing questions and concerns, to meet and share a cuppa and chat, and for the all important networking. However, heartfelt congrats on a stupendous event – a very rich, vibrant, diverse and stimulating gig.

The congress aimed to challenge a widely-held preconception that dance is a soft option for learning or study. Approaches were planned to stimulate future social action through dance via the congress dance/health project, through keynotes or by creatively workshopping action plans for The Adelaide Declaration. The congress connected with arts and health initiatives as well as UNESCO's goals for sustainable development as well as for arts education via the Seoul Agenda (2010) in order to consider how educators' work with dance might address pressing global environmental, societal and cultural concerns.

### *Workshops, scholarly gatherings and performances*

Dance enthusiasts of all ages came together at certain points but were also able to follow interests and themes in the rich and expansive congress program over 6 days and evenings from the beginnings of dance in the early years through the different stages of school and further education - and beyond through life to the joys and challenges of dancing in later years with wisdom and changing bodies. The congress highlighted the transformative educational potential of dance to nurture learning through intercultural and cross-generational gatherings. Each day the congress program began with Dance Flavours workshops offering tastes of dance. Many contributed to the 80 snapshot performances showcased on the first two evenings with other chances to perform in PopUps and the Ausdance-led BigDance during the day.

The organisation of workshops, scholarly gatherings and performances in a rage of venues provided a logistical challenge which received varying evaluative comments:

> Thought it was extremely well organised, great location for talks and debates. Well done!
>
> Wonderfully organised, great volunteers, great experiences. Really, really

> inspiring!
>
> Fully appreciate there was a massive amount of activities and events to coordinate – well done to you all.

However, others were critical of certain aspects, making suggestions such as:

> Have a better system in place for allocation of tickets to evening performances to ensure people can maximise the opportunities to view these as many missed out and the timing of when they were being allocated clashed with a workshop or meant having to wait around.
>
> More venues to view performance work.

The timing of offerings throughout the program also received criticism:

> Try to finish adult /teacher workshops at the same time as the student workshops.
>
> A longer 'breathing' time in between sessions would be great. I found it challenging to get into some sessions on time, especially when they are housed in two different venues.
>
> I was time poor and missed a lot of the offerings. Definite FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), so much to choose from. Could have had less content with repeat opportunities to access things.
>
> Less events running at the same time, so you didn't miss out on attending as much.

Repeating workshops and presentations indeed was previously an ongoing suggestion from numerous conferences which presents a dilemma for planners – is it better to offer a wide range of content or to offer less content with repetition of the activities?

The Scholarly Gatherings strand focused on more academic dance study and included over 40 workshop opportunities for delegates to gather to move along with presentations of over 100 papers, panel discussions, project dialogues, dance research workshops, lecture demonstrations, posters/installations and Pecha Kucha presentations. This was perhaps too much and requires attention by future planners.

## Keynote speakers

Keynote presentations framed the week by providing their unique perspectives on dance and provoking delegates' thinking about how dance is located in their own lives, and more broadly how dance is positioned within the diverse global cultures we live in:

- David McAllister, Artistic Director of the Australian Ballet, began the week's program by introducing delegates to the social and geographical context of dance in Australia in 'A great dancing nation: Australia's best kept secret'.

- Associate Professor Katie Dawson from the University of Texas at Austin invited the congress to actively 'Make your move', in a keynote for all ages, provoking all generations to consider how bodies create change.
- Australian cultural icon Robyn Archer, in a shared keynote with the Adelaide Festival of Ideas, stimulated discussion with her interrogation of 'freedom' and 'democracy' as ideas intrinsic to cultural, social and political democracy across the world, followed in a breakfast forum with her reflections on how dance might contribute to personal mental wealth.
- In a concluding keynote, international artistic director Sally Chance provided a thought-provoking keynote highlighting how the engagement of babies and very young children in live dance performance showcases their competence as cultural participants.

### *Young people's gatherings*

The Young People's Gatherings strand connected with UNESCO's goals for sustainability and arts education to consider how working in dance might address pressing global environmental, societal and cultural concerns. daCi's six new young Springboard congress members from Canada, New Zealand and Australia were mentored by Katie Dawson to expertly lead workshops that created a plan to stimulate future social action with 'The Adelaide Declaration'. This document was presented and signed at the Adelaide Town Hall during a special Lord Mayor's reception for key daCi and WDA leaders to meet local dignitaries. In addition, a new strand titled Teachers' Gatherings enabled dance educators to network, share and debate ideas and practices.

The Twinning project concept initiated earlier by daCi also made a leap in this congress, with 10 dynamic projects presented that united dance enthusiasts from diverse cultures and generations including Africa, America, Asia, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Meeting mostly for the first time in Adelaide, delegates shared their Twinning journeys of discovery and creation on the final morning. In addition, the congress accommodated a range of forum activity – for early career researchers, youth dance practitioners and arts policy makers.

At Panpapanpalya 2018, a Creative Gatherings project led to a site-specific dance performance at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). on the last afternoon. Directed by guest artists, Portuguese choreographer Madalena Victorino and Italian dramaturg Giacomo Scalisi, over 250 delegates prepared across the week with 10 Australian dance artist leaders, to create and perform in a site-specific 'Dance Epidemic' at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and SA Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). This project exemplifies the many partnerships facilitated by the congress with the hospital's Centre for Creative Health and an associated UniSA-funded research project exploring 'resilience' for mental health across the lifespan through creative learning in dance.

Another special guest taking part in the congress included Australian dancer Eileen Kramer who, born in 1914 (aged 104 in 2018), was no doubt the oldest delegate and led a workshop and performed in the Creative Gatherings project. This project entitled

'Dance Epidemic' was captured by documentary maker Jen Brown in the documentary Dance Epidemic.

### *Closing event*

Local Cirkidz youth company director Joshua Hoare curated an exciting closing event 'Flying without Wings' at Australia's oldest mainland theatre, the Queen's, with performances by Cirkidz, Australian Dance Theatre's Youth Ensemble and a handover presentation by Toronto, Canada, for the next 2021 daCi congress along with an announcement about the next WDA congresses by WDA-AP president Urmimala Sarker. Aussie barbeque sausages included a vegan option and there was much celebratory dancing by delegates of all ages.

## Statistical data for Panpapanpalya

This section profiles information about visitors to the congress and their observations. Whilst the congress was not a festival, the analytical framework for studying these observations draws on helpful festival discourse studies identified and discussed in Getz (2010). Our analysis focuses on the 'social cultural' and 'economic' impacts of the congress and their meaning (Getz, 2010, p.10). This method finds support in Mair and Weber (2019) as well as Getz & Page (2016) and Mair and Whitford (2013). Contextualised, social cultural impact include interest in the congress, its awareness, ratings, expectations and, likelihood of attendance of future WDA congresses. Economic analysis includes direct contribution to the local economy in terms of dollars spent on food, accommodation, tours, gifts and transport expenses.

Data for analysis was collected through a dual survey process that included administering an online questionnaire and physical handouts to participants who had no online access. These methods are consistent with qualitative data methods identified by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). Invitations to participate were sent to all registered participants as well as anyone who attended any of the festival events. A total of 97 usable questionnaire responses were received. Quantitative data analysis is presented related to both event impacts (Mackellar, 2013).

### *Results*

Analysis of responses from the 97 survey respondents appear in the tables below.

### *About the Survey respondents*

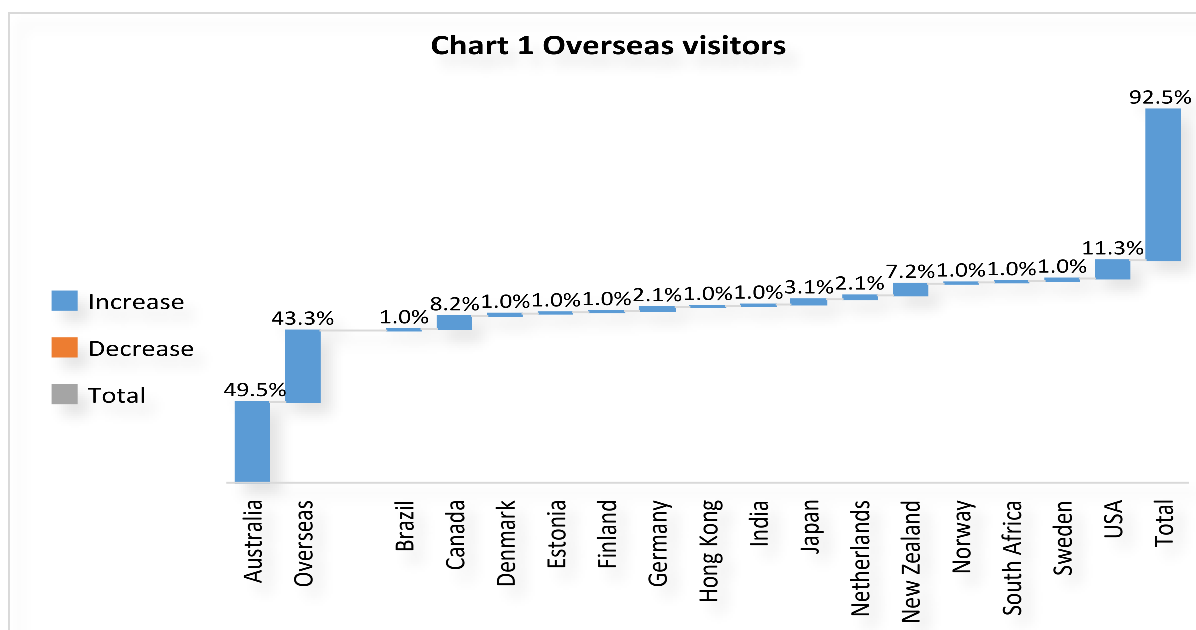
**Table 1.** Respondent profiles

| Age and gender | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 and under | 6.2% | 0.0% | 6.2% |
| 26–35 | 14.4% | 1.0% | 15.5% |
| 36–45 | 21.6% | 0.0% | 21.6% |
| 46–55 | 18.6% | 1.0% | 19.6% |

| Age and gender | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 56–65 | 18.6% | 4.1% | 22.7% |
| 66–75 | 12.4% | 1.0% | 13.4% |
| 76 and over | 1.0% | 0.0% | 1.0% |
| ***Total*** | ***92.8%*** | ***7.2%*** | ***100.0%*** |
| **Country of residence** | | | |
| Australia | 49.5% | 4.1% | 53.6% |
| Overseas | 43.3% | 3.1% | 46.4% |
| **Australian** | | | |
| Queensland – QLD | 6.1% | 1.0% | 7.1% |
| New South Wales – NSW | 7.1% | 0.0% | 7.1% |
| Victoria – VIC | 12.1% | 0.0% | 12.1% |
| Tasmania – TAS | 1.0% | 0.0% | 1.0% |
| South Australia – SA | 11.1% | 2.0% | 13.1% |
| Western Australia – WA | 5.0% | 0.0% | 5.0% |
| Australian Capital Territory – ACT | 7.1% | 1.0% | 8.1% |
| ***Total*** | ***49.5%*** | ***4.1%*** | ***53.5%*** |
| **Foreign** | | | |
| USA | 11.3% | 2.1% | 13.4% |
| Canada | 8.2% | 0.0% | 8.2% |
| New Zealand | 7.2% | 0.0% | 7.2% |
| Japan | 3.1% | 0.0% | 3.1% |
| Germany | 2.1% | 0.0% | 2.1% |
| Other countries | 11.1% | 1.1% | 12.2% |
| ***Total*** | ***43.0%*** | ***3.2%*** | ***46.2%*** |

Table 1 shows that respondents were overwhelmingly female (92.8%) three-quarters (73.2%) of whom were in the 26-65 age group. Although there was a small under 25 representation (6.2%), interestingly 14.4% were older participants. A very negligible proportion of males participated in the survey. Interest in ascertaining participants' nationalities shows that while Australian respondents were fractionally the dominant response group, those from overseas were almost equally representative. Although respondents were mainly South Australians, a 13.1% participation rate is not very significant especially in light of the congress being hosted in Adelaide.

As to where the respondents hailed from, Chart 1 displays their relevant nationalities. The bars on both extremes display aggregate visitor numbers. For overseas visitors, the biggest cohorts were the USA 11.3%; Canada 8.2% and NZ 7.2%.




Registration data however, showed that delegates came from as far as Barbados, Jamaica, South Africa, Uganda, Portugal, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Germany along with Asia-Pacific members from New Zealand, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

## Social impact

### *Interest in the congress and its activities*

We were interested in examining the sources of information respondents accessed in relation to Panpapanpalya and the congress. So, we asked respondents:

Where did you hear/learn about Panpapanpalya? The responses are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Sources of information

| | Friend/ Family | School | Univer-sity | Work | Social Media | Word-of-Mouth | WDA email | daCi News-letter | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Panel A | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 12.6% | 3.2% | 4.2% | 9.5% | 6.3% | 17.9% | 4.2% | 15.8% | 18.9% | 92.6% |
| Male | 2.1% | 0.0% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 7.4% |
| Total | 14.7% | 3.2% | 5.3% | 10.5% | 6.3% | 17.9% | 5.3% | 16.8% | 20.0% | 100.0% |
| Panel B | | | | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 8.4% | 1.1% | 2.1% | 7.4% | 5.3% | 15.8% | 1.1% | 3.2% | 8.4% | 52.6% |
| Overseas | 6.3% | 2.1% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 1.1% | 2.1% | 4.2% | 13.7% | 11.6% | 47.4% |

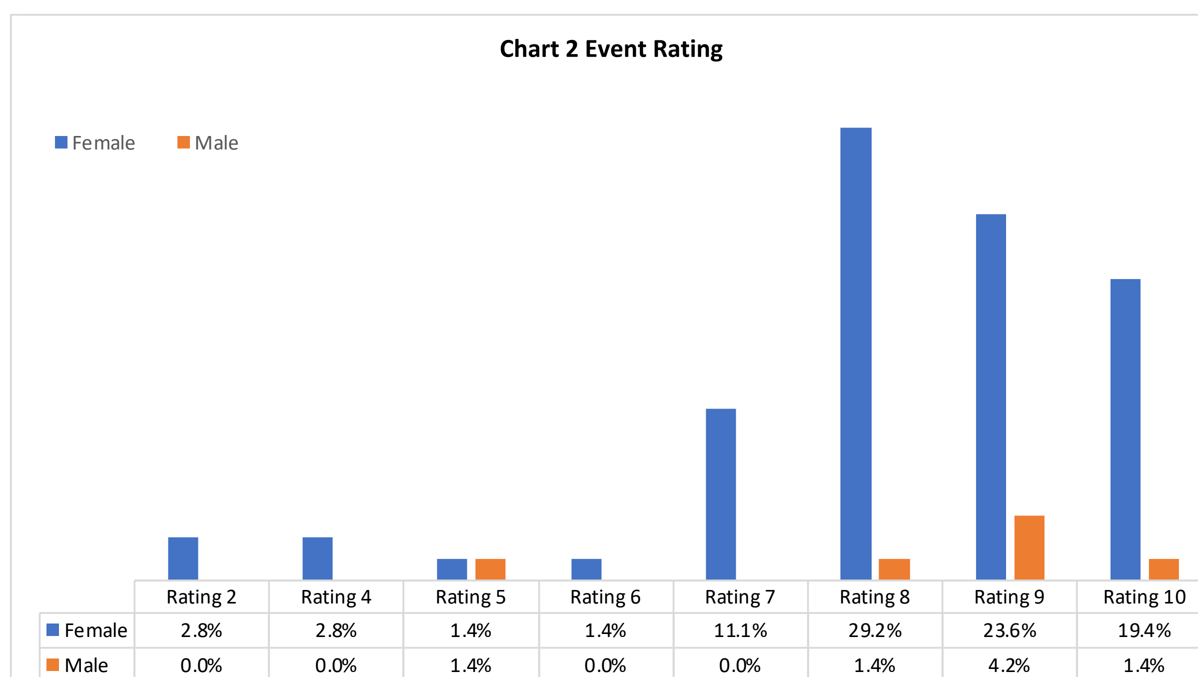
The primary source of information was from 'other' sources (20%), presumably related to prior knowledge of daCi and its activities and awareness through print media. Prior knowledge and attendance may also perhaps precipitated interest by word of mouth; The daCi newsletter was also influential and so was interest through family and friends. Collectively these sources accounted for 69.4% of respondents' source of information. Social media was relatively low at 6.3% as were direct communications via emails and through educational institutions. The information in Panel A when disaggregated, indicates that 15.8% of Australians learned from word-of-mouth while the daCi newsletter at 13.7% was the primary source of information for overseas visitors.

## How did respondents rate the congress and its activities?

We were also interested in examining the overall assessment of the congress and its proceedings and asked respondents the following:

*Overall, how would you rate this event? (On a Scale of 10, 1 being Poor and 10 being Excellent)*

**Chart 2** displays their responses.




| | Rating 2 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 | Rating 6 | Rating 7 | Rating 8 | Rating 9 | Rating 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 2.8% | 2.8% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 11.1% | 29.2% | 23.6% | 19.4% |
| Male | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 4.2% | 1.4% |

Using rating 6 as a midpoint for measuring satisfaction/dissatisfaction, 9.8% returned a rating of 6 or less. Around four-fifths (79.2%) rated the event highly (8 to 10). Using age as a measure to deconstruct the ratings, satisfaction rating was fairly consistent in the following age groups: 36–45 years 16.4%; 46–55 years 17.8% and, 56–65 years 16.5%.

**Table 3.** Event rating by major nationalities

| Country | Rating 2 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 | Rating 6 | Rating 7 | Rating 8 | Rating 9 | Rating 10 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 12.3% | 13.7% | 11.0% | 8.2% | 49.3% |
| Canada | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 6.8% | 9.6% |
| New Zealand | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.1% | 4.1% | 0.0% | 9.6% |
| USA | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.8% | 6.8% | 1.4% | 15.1% |
| Collectively | 2.8% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 12.3% | 24.6% | 23.3% | 16.4% | 83.6% |

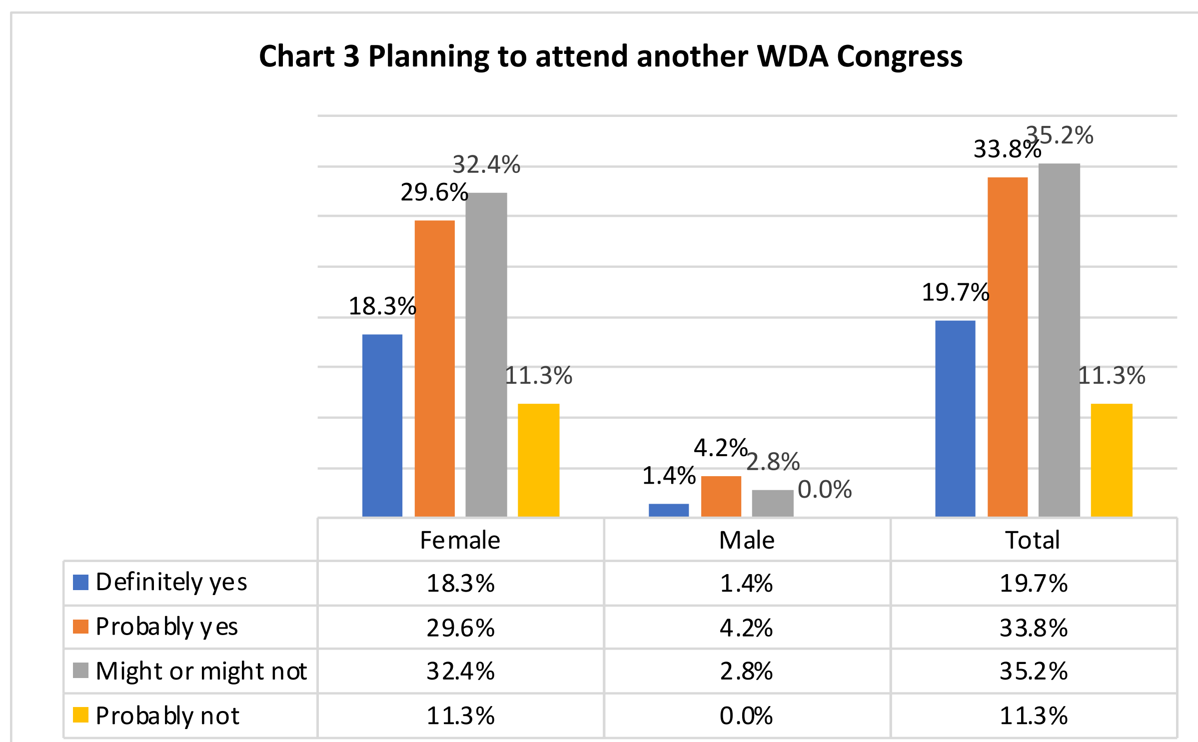
Using yet another yardstick, overseas respondents rated the event very highly on a scale between 8–9. These responses are indicative of the overall success of the congress.

## Attending future events

What follows immediately from the numbers in Table 3 is to examine the desire of people attending future congresses and events. Respondents were therefore asked:

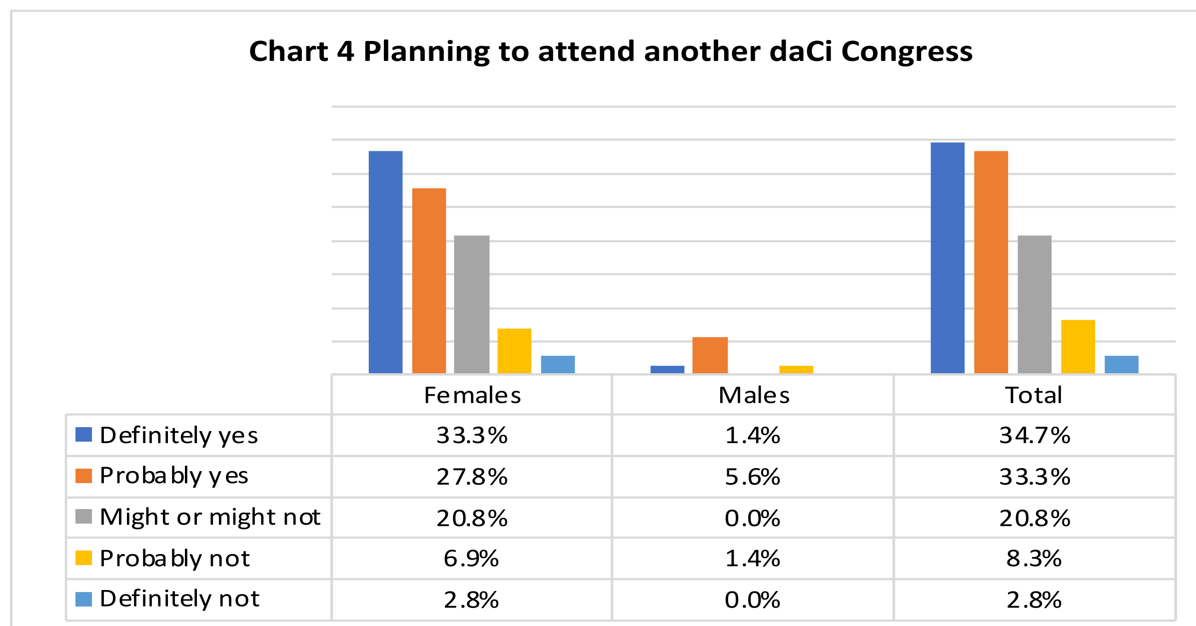
Do you plan to attend another WDA Congress?

Chart 3 illustrate their responses.




| | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Definitely yes | 18.3% | 1.4% | 19.7% |
| Probably yes | 29.6% | 4.2% | 33.8% |
| Might or might not | 32.4% | 2.8% | 35.2% |
| Probably not | 11.3% | 0.0% | 11.3% |

While only one-fifth (19.7%) were genuinely committed, that desire gradually dissipates as we observe from the progressive decline in intent. We posed the same question in relation to attending future daCi events. The results are displayed in Chart 4.




| | Females | Males | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Definitely yes | 33.3% | 1.4% | 34.7% |
| Probably yes | 27.8% | 5.6% | 33.3% |
| Might or might not | 20.8% | 0.0% | 20.8% |
| Probably not | 6.9% | 1.4% | 8.3% |
| Definitely not | 2.8% | 0.0% | 2.8% |

Comparing Charts 3 and 4, there is a greater desire to attend future daCi events than WDA ones (68% to 53.5%).

### *Responses to specific issues related to the 2018 Panpapanpalya event*

#### *Expectations*

Did the event meet expectations?

**Table 4.** Whether the event exceeded my expectation

| Perceptions | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 18.6% | 2.9% | 21.4% |
| Agree | 30.0% | 2.9% | 32.9% |
| Somewhat agree | 20.0% | 0.0% | 20.0% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 11.4% | 2.9% | 14.3% |
| Somewhat disagree | 5.7% | 0.0% | 5.7% |
| Disagree | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Strongly disagree | 5.7% | 0.0% | 5.7% |
| Total | 91.4% | 8.6% | 100.0% |

Over half respondents (54.3%) agreed while at the lower extreme, 11.4% disagreed.

### *Indigenous content*

The Indigenous content was good!

**Table 5.** The Indigenous content was good

| Perceptions | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 33.8% | 1.5% | 35.3% |
| Agree | 27.9% | 2.9% | 30.9% |
| Somewhat agree | 19.1% | 2.9% | 22.1% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2.9% | 1.5% | 4.4% |
| Somewhat disagree | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Disagree | 4.4% | 0.0% | 4.4% |
| Strongly disagree | 2.9% | 0.0% | 2.9% |

Table 5 confirms the popularity of Indigenous content and the high degree of satisfaction with these performances. Two-thirds (66.2%) rated the content highly. Only a negligible 7.3% expressed disappointment.

### *Networking*

**Table 6.** Event increased my network

| Perceptions | Female | Male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 33.8% | 1.5% | 35.3% |
| Agree | 27.9% | 2.9% | 30.9% |
| Somewhat agree | 19.1% | 2.9% | 22.1% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2.9% | 1.5% | 4.4% |
| Somewhat disagree | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Disagree | 4.4% | 0.0% | 4.4% |
| Strongly disagree | 2.9% | 0.0% | 2.9% |

Responses in Table 6 were very consistent with those in Table 5. Once again, two-thirds agreed with the statement that daCi and the congress enhanced their networking.

**Table 7.** Five top and bottom events

| Event | Australians | Event | Foreigners |
|---|---|---|---|
| Panel A Top five | | | |
| Breakfast forums | 77.8% | Enjoying Aboriginal culture | 79.2% |

| Event | Australians | Event | Foreigners |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nursery | 75.0% | Closing event | 76.0% |
| From Darkness to Day | 55.6% | Creatures | 75.0% |
| David McAllister keynote | 55.2% | Food/dining | 73.3% |
| Experiencing the Dance Festival | 51.3% | Dance Pop-Ups | 66.7% |
| Panel B Bottom five | | | |
| Museums | 33.3% | Experiencing the Dance Festival | 48.7% |
| Food/dining | 26.7% | David McAllister keynote | 44.8% |
| Creatures | 25.0% | From Darkness to Day | 44.4% |
| Closing event | 24.0% | Nursery | 25.0% |
| Enjoying Aboriginal culture | 20.8% | Breakfast forums | 22.2% |

Table 7 shows event preference dispersion between the two groups. Whereas 'breakfast forums' and 'Nursery' ranked high among Australians, both were rated lowest by foreigners. We notice the same pattern between Australian top and foreign bottom rankings (Closing event, Aboriginal culture).

**Table 8.** What do you think Panpapanpalya contributes to the local community?

| Observation | Australians | Foreigners |
|---|---|---|
| Promotes goodwill among people | 34.3% | 65.7% |
| City pride | 38.7% | 61.3% |
| A special event to look forward to | 38.9% | 61.1% |
| Gets people to socialise | 41.7% | 58.3% |
| Encourages engagement | 42.9% | 57.1% |
| Learning about dance | 43.8% | 56.3% |
| Understanding of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture Broadens cultural knowledge | 43.9% | 56.1% |
| Promotes the dance community | 45.0% | 55.0% |
| Brings business to Adelaide | 46.0% | 54.0% |
| Supports the arts | 47.7% | 52.3% |
| Brings people to Adelaide | 47.8% | 52.2% |
| Shows what Adelaide has to offer | 48.0% | 52.0% |
| Awareness of dance | 48.4% | 51.6% |

Note: the high-to-low observations uses foreigners as the reference for comparison.

Table 8 provides a snapshot of how or otherwise the Panpapanpalya event contributed to the local community. In general Table 8 suggests Australians ranked contributions relatively low compared to foreigners. The first three observations for instance, indicate polar opposites among the two groups.

## Economic impact

### *Stay in Adelaide*

Visitors are important economic to contributors to the city and the community. Intuitively, the longer their stay, the greater the financial stimulus to the economy through direct spending. Table 9. One third (33.0%) only spent a day, 27.8% remained for 6 to 7 days while 13.5% stayed for 10 days and longer. Overall, the minimum stay was 1 day (33%), maximum 16 days (2%) and the average stay was 5.5 days.

**Table 9.** Length of stay in Adelaide

| Days | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | >10 days | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 30.9% | 2.1% | 1.0% | 4.1% | 3.1% | 11.3% | 14.4% | 4.1% | 6.2% | 4.1% | 11.5% | 92.8% |
| Male | 2.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.1% | 1.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.0% | 7.2% |
| Total | 33.0% | 2.1% | 1.0% | 4.1% | 3.1% | 11.3% | 16.5% | 5.2% | 6.2% | 4.1% | 13.5% | 100.1% |

Table 10 sets out information related to respondents preferred accommodation during and following for the congress. Three-to-four-star hotel accommodation was most popular followed by Airbnb and 5-star hotels. Collectively, thesis represents three-quarters or 67.7% in terms of accommodation and preferences. Table 10 provides an analysis of accommodation preferences by nationality.

**Table 10.** Most preferred place of stay by nationality

| Country | 5-star | 3-4 star | Motel | Airbnb | Family | Friends | Hostel | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 1.4% | 15.9% | 0.0% | 11.6% | 2.9% | 0.0% | 2.9% | 11.6% | 46.4% |
| Canada | 1.4% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 10.1% |
| New Zealand | 0.0% | 5.8% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 10.1% |
| USA | 2.9% | 5.8% | 1.4% | 2.9% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 15.9% |
| Collective | 5.7% | 31.8% | 1.4% | 20.2% | 4.3% | 1.4% | 2.9% | 14.4% | 82.5% |

Australians pereferred 3–4 star and Airbnb accommodation. The same pattern holds for the other nationalities. The US was the second largest cohort who preferred hotel

and Airbnb accommodation.The economic impact is also visible though a variety of other economic drivers such as transport, food and retail spending. Table 11 sets out the most popular mode of transport used by participants.

**Table 11.** Mode of transport

| Age | Walk | Taxi | Tram | Bus | Car | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 and under | 5.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.7% |
| 26–35 | 11.4% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 12.9% |
| 36–45 | 15.7% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 2.9% | 1.4% | 21.4% |
| 46–55 | 14.3% | 0.0% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 18.6% |
| 56–65 | 18.6% | 0.0% | 2.9% | 4.3% | 1.4% | 27.1% |
| 66–75 | 8.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.9% | 11.4% |
| 76 and over | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.0% | 2.9% |
| Total | 75.7% | 1.4% | 8.6% | 8.6% | 5.7% | 100.0% |

Given proximity of hotels and other accommodation to the main venue, Table 12 indicates active physical exercise among all age groups as most people preferred walking than using other modes of transport.

**Table 12.** Visitor dollar spent

| Descriptive Statistics | N | Range | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Money spent while in Adelaide1 | 74 | 5,4902 | 0 | 5,490 | 1114.78 | 1177.85 |
| Accommodation | 74 | 2,500 | 0 | 2,500 | 504.32 | 636.94 |
| Food & Drinks | 74 | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 | 214.05 | 221.81 |
| Transport | 73 | 2,000 | 0 | 2,000 | 136.26 | 341.44 |
| Organised Tours/Trips | 74 | 1,100 | 0 | 1,100 | 78.97 | 204.83 |
| Dance | 71 | 500 | 0 | 500 | 67.45 | 111.84 |
| Personal items | 74 | 500 | 0 | 500 | 60.32 | 105.66 |
| Souvenirs, books, gifts | 74 | 400 | 0 | 400 | 41.96 | 72.78 |
| Other | 74 | 150 | 0 | 150 | 10.14 | 29.54 |
| Galleries | 74 | 50 | 0 | 50 | 4.12 | 11.36 |
| Art | 73 | 50 | 0 | 50 | 1.78 | 8.68 |

Notes: 1 Estimated amount spent by respondents during length of stay

2 Amounts are averaged and quoted in Australian dollars

Visitors spent on average $1115 for the duration of their stay. We estimate that, based on average visitor attendance of 200 per day, the direct economic impact of the congress would be in the $250k to $300k when direct costs (e.g. staging the event, rental, costs of labour, costs of performers and other related) are added.

The above spendings are relevant to both Australian and overseas visitors. We separated the spending behaviour of both groups. As expected, average overseas visitors' spending of $1409 was significantly higher than the average of $820 spent by Australians.

## Some issues

Evaluation of this international conference was provided in English only, proving a challenge for responses by those participants with English as a second language. Future planning requires attention to the opportunities afforded by online translation using a simple evaluation framework with implications for analysis.

Visa application refusals caused considerable distress at the last minute for young Ugandan daCi members, their teachers and collaborating Twinning project partners in Adelaide. Arrangements were made for Zoom interactions online between the young people involved. Organisers learned much from this experience and strategies were identified to avoid such disappointment in future.

## A lasting legacy

The joint congress was an important one-off event for South Australia and overall resounding positive feedback was received from delegates. Development of the Adelaide Declaration by young people, with respect to the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, 2016 - 2020 Strategy, was a significant milestone in the relationship between daCi and WDA's Education & Training Network. As shown above, the estimated dollar value to the local economy was generated by interstate and international visitors and this impact is an important consideration when making bids for such future events.

Many travelled from across the globe for a first visit to Australia. Success was due to many in this global collaboration: international committee colleagues Ralph Buck and Susan Koff, along with congress mentor Ann Kipling Brown plus local congress coordinator Julie Orchard, numerous members of the Australian organising committee, staff and students from the University of South Australia and venue partner Adelaide College of the Arts.

The congress was made possible by generous funding from the Adelaide City Council and the South Australian government via Arts SA, as well as support from partners Adelaide Convention Bureau, Ausdance, The Royal Academy of Dance, Cirkidz and Kurruru Arts and Culture Hub. Panpapanpalya 2018 was one of the world's largest gatherings to generate new thoughts and ideas for dance learning and teaching in

the 21st century, providing significant networking opportunities at local, national and international levels:

> I loved the conference and the facilities. A great event for me.

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## Biographies

**Jeff Meiners EdD** is a lecturer and researcher at the University of South Australia. He has taught extensively in schools, universities, as leader of a dance education team in London, and with Ausdance to support dance development. Jeff works with the National Advocates for Arts Education, government and education departments plus overseas projects and as movement director for children's theatre. Jeff was the Australia Council Dance Board's Community Representative (2002–7), 2009 Australian Dance Award winner for Outstanding Services to Dance Education and dance writer for the new Australian national curriculum's Arts Shape paper. Jeff's doctoral research focuses on dance in the primary school curriculum.

**Mahmood Nathie PhD** is an Islamic finance scholar and practitioner, a chartered accountant by profession with over four decades of professional experience in accounting, finance and tax. Along with a PhD, he holds post-graduate degrees in Economics, Taxation and Finance. He has published in numerous journals and presented numerous papers at major Islamic finance conferences. He taught Islamic studies and Finance at UniSA's Centre for Islamic Thought and Education. His research examining Islamic financial literacy among Australian Muslim adults and Islamic schools led to collaborative research with partners in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. He takes a keen interest in community affairs, engaging with local groups and financial institutions.

**Deborah Price PhD** is Research Degree Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in Inclusive Education and Wellbeing at UniSA. Her research, teaching and scholarship span inclusive education and wellbeing, advocating codesign approaches, valuing the diverse voices of young people. Current research contributes to broad themes of social justice and equity, with a focus on disability studies and special education; alternative education; culturally and religiously responsive pedagogies. She has led research projects supported by national competitive grants and was a Chief Investigator on the Engagement and Wellbeing research node involving collaborative research in northern Adelaide to engage students in wellbeing curriculum and raise student university aspirations. She led the Youthworx South Australia initiative with local councils and organisations focused on re-engaging youth in learning and employment through creative film-making.

# Review of literature: creative learning through dance – exploring effects on mental wealth across generations

Cathy Adamek, University of South Australia

## Abstract

This paper provides a literature review written to support a University of South Australia research project associated with the Panpapanpalya 2018 global dance congress held in Adelaide, South Australia. The project focused on dance leaders and congress participants in a choreographic process called *Creative Gatherings* culminating in 12 site-specific dance installations presented as a promenade performance at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). The research aimed to investigate how participation in creative dance supports mental wealth and well-being. It provided a unique opportunity to gain insight into how creative learning through dance might build social and emotional wellbeing and resilience through concurrent participant interviews, surveys and observational methods. This review provides a contextual overview to inform the allied research project through current and historical literature relating to the socio-cultural effects of creative dance and dance therapy methodologies on well-being and mental wealth across the lifespan. The paper provides a scan of observations on perceptions of Western dance practice, discussing bodies of literature from a variety of perspectives: education, cultural studies, anthropology, communications theory, dance and performance studies, health science, neuroscience and psychology, all informative for the research project.

Keywords: mental wealth, health, well-being, dance therapy, creative dance

## Introduction: mental health and mental wealth

Mental health conditions and increasing suicidality across generations are prevalent across Australia (Beyond Blue, 2017; Lifeline, 2017). People's cognitive and emotional resources as mental capital are crucial to the concept of building the 'mental wealth' of nations (Beddington et al., 2008). Literature reports connections between music, health and wellbeing (MacDonald et al., 2013) but the effects of dance upon people's lives are relatively unknown. The South Australian Mental Health Commission is concerned with strengthening the mental health and wellbeing of South Australians 'in order to build mental capital and grow the State's mental wealth' (2017). Australia's Health Ministers and Cultural Ministers recognise 'The Arts' role in significantly

contributing to improving the future health and wellbeing of all Australians (Australian Government Department of Communications and the Arts, 2013).

To support understanding of how dance significantly contributes to people's healthy futures, an interdisciplinary research project was aligned with the Panpapanpalya 2018 global dance congress. The research combined expertise across health sciences, education, arts, psychology and creative industries to investigate the impact of inclusive dance teaching practices for creative learning across generations. This paper provides a literature review as a contextual overview to inform the research project, with attention given to current and historical writings relevant to the socio-cultural effects of creative dance learning on well-being and mental wealth across the lifespan.

## Historical Context: The developing value of dance

The recognition of dance as an established discipline and major art form is relatively recent, emergent in the last 30 to 40 years. Reasons for this were suggested by Meekums (2002) and Sanderson (2001), that the focus on the body compared with other art forms is underpinned by a Descartesian dualism where the body is seen as inferior to the mind. Also, that dance is an art form mainly suited to women - a prevailing view found from their UK based studies (Koch, 2008; Risner, 2007). Hierarchical views permeated perceptions of dance: for example, community versus performance-based professional notions of excellence Lomas, 1998). These attitudes towards dance have been challenged (see for example Adair, 1992; Hanna, 1988). The value of dance and art in general as everyday experience, as opposed to specialised practice, emerged in academic writing in the late twentieth century and will be discussed in the following sections. Such contributions from literature challenge notions of dance as exclusively for expert-trained practitioners within a professional performance context.

## Cultural anthropology

Dance as a universal communitarian ritualistic practice, integral to traditional cultures, is central to the work of cultural anthropologists Handelman (1998), Schechner (1977, 2003), Hanna (1979) and Turner (1986). Their work examines the importance of cultural expression as a part of everyday human ritual and the role of dance in life events traditionally. A body of work in cultural studies and cultural anthropology examines popular culture and the everyday use of what had been considered low forms of culture that sat outside the academy and theatre, challenging traditional theatrical experience of high art forms and formal training (Hanna, 1988; Bell, 1992). Instead, performance has been reframed as a concept that pervades all aspects of human existence; that dance and other cultural forms are an essential part of everyday life, not just for those who are professionally trained. These shifts in the function and role of dance and indeed all the arts as essential to human identity connected to physical and mental function and well-being, are encompassed loosely by the late 20th century term, post-modern dance. Early postmodern dance featured ideas such as any movement can be dance and any person can be a dancer (Banes, 2011), where improvisation is a key modality to be discussed later.

## Connection between dance movement and emotion/affect

The Ancient Greeks equated dance with catharsis (Payne, 1992). Belfiore and Bennett (2008) wrote on the social impact of the arts in general on Western society and drew attention to the role of catharsis, art as play and art as therapy. There has been interest in the role of emotion generally in the social sciences, led from research in psychology and the neurosciences producing studies in emotion where the mental and physical are connected (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Barrett, 2013). A book by De Silva (2017) refers to new knowledge from neuropsychology and the pathways between emotions and the body. From a purely physiological perspective, dance is able to open up physical pathways to make the body more flexible and resilient (Ward, 2008). A recent publication drawn from our research project examines the connection between dance and resilience (Buck and Snook, 2019). However, it is suggested that the expressive characteristics of dance rather than the exercise itself may assist individuals to deal with feelings otherwise difficult to accept or express (Svoboda, 2007; Hanna, 2014; Lee, 2017). Barrett et al. (2016) argue that dance and other artistic forms are a way to connect and express emotion, as a way of telling stories and to express self.

## Communication theory: kinesics

Communication theory places dance as a communicative act and a form of non-verbal communication or kinesics, and a way to connect to others beyond language barriers. An authoritative analysis of non-verbal behaviour by Birdwhistell (1971) in the 1950s identified that non-verbal signifiers in human communication were like a language. He created a codified system to categorise these common patterns and variables, establishing the study of kinesics as anthropology. Earlier studies by Mead (1976) and Efron (1941) identified and examined the non-verbal across different cultural groups as a profound but hitherto unrecognised form of communication. It is significant that further work in the area linking psychology and neuroscience identified that non-verbal communication was associated with a different part of the brain than speech. Where speech was connected to the cerebral cortex, kinesics came from the older, emotional brain centre, or limbic system (Danesi, 2013; Knapp, 1965; Eckman, 1989, 2003). The physical proximity between the human brain's non-verbal and emotional central processors would appear significant in regard to this current study. Recent studies (Colace, 2017) highlight how body language and non-verbal communication are key elements for the treatment of patients who have suffered from developmental traumas.

## Post-modern dance and somatic practice

Ross (2005) wrote an account of the work and life of performance artist Anna Halprin who pioneered the concept of postmodern dance. Significantly for this study, from 1972 she mapped psychological well-being and health through choreography (Ross, 2005, p. 300), implementing dance as a vital agent for community expression and social change. Halprin was diagnosed with cancer and this inspired her to make a personal ritual that helped her healing process. Over the years, she continued to work with terminally ill patients. Using tools of the body, movement, dialogue, voice,

drawing, improvisation, performance, and reflection, she was able to provoke others to use art as a therapy to heal themselves. Halprin in a later interview did not claim her methods to be therapy, rather a humanist approach to integrating emotional and psychological experience with creative expression (Wang, 2017).

Connected to modern or contemporary dance practice, early movement practitioners Laban (1975), Feldenkrais (1972), Rolf (1975), Chace (1975), and Whitehouse (1979) developed practices of body conditioning that looks at how dance helps to break down accumulated tension through release (Koch, 2008). Techniques involved shared bodily contact through contact improvisation, pioneered by Steve Paxton (1975) and partnered work based on weight transference. Examples of Laban's movement elements include body awareness; space awareness; the awareness of weight, time, and flow; and the adaptation to partners and groups (Bergmann, 1995). This can translate to an individual's everyday practice of body and movement, giving an awareness of the emotional and physical tension being held in the body which can lead to repetitive strain injuries.

A body of academic work (Myers, 1983; Kaparo, 2012; Barratt, 2013) documents the role of somatic practice in dance training and education as rehabilitation therapy, promoting awareness of the body through gentle physical practice. Myer's seminal U.S. article on somatics (1983) describes taking time to feel the weight of the body, awareness of what the body is doing therefore creating a mental connection to the physical. Govoni & Weatherhogg (2007) and de Silva (2017) investigate the relationship of the body to the emotions as the psychology of the body (Barratt, 2013, p. 21). De Silva (2017) focusses on a new wave of somatic psychology termed somatic intelligence emerging within the context of mindfulness-based pain management described in earlier work by Kabat-Zinn (2003), Burch (2010) and Kaparo (2012). Somatic psychology examines the mind body connection and its role in therapy. Barratt's work (2013) provides a narrative, where the emergence of somatic psychology is presented against the background of the modern history of psychology.

## Improvisation

In the last fifteen years a body of work has dealt with dance and improvisation and the role of the human body and bodily interactions in improvisation. In his article on dance improvisation in 2000, Carter summarises the historical development of improvisation throughout the modernist period and casts it as a defining influence on all modern art forms. Montuori (2003) writes that improvisation is still commonly seen as inferior, as makeshift or crude, a deviation from the established correct order. He argues that, although improvisation represents disorder as opposed to order, creativity is naturally disordered; 'improvisers tell a story – they are the story'. This open form was heralded in many avant-garde contexts where the process becomes more important than the final product, which by definition is in constant flux (Carter, 2000). In the arts generally, improvisation involves the suspension of set structures and the introduction of non-traditional elements. Improvisation thus requires the power to invent new forms spontaneously (Carter, 2000). Smith and Deane (1997) define improvisation as 'the simultaneous conception and performance of a work' (p. 3).

Malbon's idea of 'performativity' in relation to 'clubbing' where dancing is both an imaginative and an emotional practice (1999) provide some insight into social dance practice and its relationship to catharsis and identity (Adamek, 2011).

Bräuninger's 2014 study showed that dance techniques, especially improvisation with body contact are successful and effective methods of therapy. Meta-analysis studies (Andersen, 2015; Koch et al., 2008; Strassel et al., 2011; Zubala & Karkou, 2015) show that improvisational movement and dance is central to Dance Movement Therapy, to be considered next as this practice encourages emotional, cognitive and social integration in a person (Koch, 2008), crucial to the notion of building mental wealth.

## Dance movement therapy (DMT)

The use of dance as a healing tool is known as 'dance movement therapy' (Levy, 2005; Payne, 1992). Dance therapy is a new discipline, a product of the twentieth century. According to Sonke et al., (2009), the arts in healthcare movement came into being in the 1970s in the US which has been referred to earlier in this review. There is a body of work from the 1980s on, that examines movement therapy and its role in psychoanalysis and therapy. In an important research study, Leste and Rust (1984) found anxiety levels decreased in the dance experimental group in comparison to the music therapy and the physical education control groups. Chodorow (1991) looked at the connection between the body, emotions and the unconscious and the role of movement in this relationship. DMT's recent methodological and theoretical development has led to the proliferation of various dance therapy models (Panagiotopoulou 2011). Koch et al. 2008, noted that the most important practices in the field of DMT were movement-based approaches connected with Laban, interactive approaches of Chace and psychodynamic practices of Whitehouse and authentic movement. Bräuninger (2014) explains that the use of metaphor and expression are essential techniques of DMT where, in the words of Halprin, 'movement itself becomes a metaphor for our being'.

Generally, in the literature there is an expression of need for further studies in dance therapy with larger sample groups, observational studies and well-performed randomised control trials (Zubala & Karkou, 2015; Strassel et al., 2011). They suggest that dance therapy should be considered as a potentially relevant add-on therapy for a variety of conditions that do not respond well to conventional medical treatments. The results of a 2012 meta-analysis of the last 17 years of studies, suggest that Dance Movement Therapy and dance generally are effective for increasing quality of life and decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Koch et al., 2008; Mala et al., 2012). Dance Movement Therapy's influence on adolescents' mathematics and social/emotional behaviour was tested with positive results by Andersen in 2015.

## Studies on well-being using creative dance for children and young people

Using a genealogical framework, Meiners (2017) traced '… differing interests and philosophical rationales towards creative approaches to dance that emerged

over time in particular contexts' (p.76), including Laban's influence. As previously mentioned, movement themes developed from Laban have formed the basis of numerous educational handbooks on creative dance for children, among them Preston-Dunlop (1980) and Joyce (1980). Bergmann (2015) suggests that the development of an elemental movement vocabulary has a wider purpose; to express the inner self, as does Joyce who states that the goal of creative dance is 'to communicate through movement' (1980 p. 1). Cote (2006) addresses the link between society and dance education, art appreciation, and holistic wellness in contemporary student learning. Other studies suggest strong links between increased cognitive ability and dance as referred to by Hanna (2014).

Papers from the 2016 dance and the Child international (daCi) conference in Copenhagen address the question: Can young people develop positively as human beings through dance and collaborative practices? Working with young people and creative dance in central Java, Lavelle comments: 'for young people, dance helps them define and perceive their own and others' identities…in my opinion this is because dance and movement involve the young person's whole being and not just his/her intellect' (2016).

A small-scale study in Sweden compared Laban-based dance practice with Physical Education finding the differences between the two approaches lay in the student's abilities to express their emotions through dance and create unpredictable movement instead of imitating and reproducing movement (Mattsson, 2016). In a Taipei study (Jung, 2016), 12 postgraduates designed weekly arts-integration activities over four months guiding 15 special-needs children. Jung noted the children's increased ability to collaborate and co-operate in a relaxed manner to employ creative thinking to produce an outcome.

Bungay and Vella-Burrows (2013) rapid review explores the effects of participating in creative activities on the health and well-being of children aged between 11 and 18 years and included a review of literature between 2004-2011. Their recommendations suggested that qualitative studies often provide little detail about the process of data collection or analysis. The relative lack of methodological rigour in the arts and health field is attributed to the complex nature of the interventions, presenting challenges to researchers' data collection and the selection of appropriate outcome measures to assess effectiveness (Bungay & Vella-Burrows, 2013, p. 29). The project commissioners were particularly interested in the finding that arts/creative projects have the potential to address young people's sense of self-worth and life skills as a mechanism for promoting behavioural change and healthy lifestyles. Because of this, they went onto explore funding opportunities to establish participatory arts projects for young people in the local area.

A recent example of a larger scale study conducted with methodological rigour, occurred In Taiwan in 2012 at Cloud Gate Dance School which teaches 10,000 students of all ages with a focus on creative movement. They conducted research

from 2012 on the impact of its *Life Pulse* classes, by the independent Socio-Economic Survey Research Centre. A 2015 report was released based on participants reflections, observation, and teacher comments through questionnaire and interview of 657 children aged between 12-18 and a comparison group of students who didn't attend the school. This showed that young people in the study of dance have excellent social skills, a more positive outlook on life and greater expressive self-confidence than the rest of the survey population. Those involved in dance are more interested and more confident in their abilities (Mead, 2016).

## Studies in dance as an aid for mental health and disease in older participants

Various pilot studies have tested different dance forms on mental health or for specific conditions. What emerged from the literature is much initial work focusing on dance as physical activity (other studies referred to measuring the effectiveness of kick boxing) rather than the creative process. Meekums et al (2015) undertook quantitative research on 147 participants in response to a need for evidence-based drug free treatments for depression. They recommend the need for larger scale studies, reflecting that either because of prejudiced views of dance as 'not serious' remain or because randomized controlled trials (the gold standard of quantitative designs) are not seen as readily fitting Dance Movement Therapy or creative dance practice, a 'chicken and egg' situation has developed. Therefore, there is limited evidence of effectiveness which in turn leads to underfunding of research in this area (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006; Koch et al., 2007, 2014; Mala et al., 2012).

Pilot studies on dance and dementia are more conclusively positive (Guzman et al., 2013; Karkou & Meekums, 2017). Additionally, Pinniger et al. (2012) found that the combination of tango music and partnered dancing improved emotional state. Tango participants also reported significant reductions in stress levels relative to meditation and waiting-list controls. Such studies suggest that dynamic physical activities may be more effective in reducing psychological stress than static activities such as mindfulness meditation, consistent with the results of Röhricht and Priebe (2006) who examined body-orientated activities in patients with schizophrenia.

Researchers have explored dance as a therapy for older people with Parkinson's, dementia, diabetes, and depression (Houston & McGill, 2013). Other studies have found dancing enhances motor behavior, balance, and posture, as well as perceptual and cognitive abilities (Kattenstroth et al., 2009, 2013). The benefits of dance with people suffering from Parkinson's is demonstrated in the Dance for Parkinson's Disease programme initiated by renowned New York company Mark Morris Dance Group, on which a number of research studies were conducted from 2001 (Young-Mason, 2013). In 2013 classes ran in 100 communities in eight countries based on its success. Young-Mason (2013) recommends this treatment to clinical nurse specialists. Steinberg-Oren et al. (2016) and Levy et al. (2018) describe a creative arts therapy practice that was established to improve access to mental health care and rehabilitation for rural veterans over three years, stating that creative arts therapies have long played an active role in rehabilitation of wounded and ill service members.

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Faculty of Education, initiated a report entitled Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing in 2013 which conducted research to address issues of social isolation, premature enfeeblement, and age-related cognitive impairment with dance as an intervention strategy. Recent research now positions dance ahead of other physical activity in terms of the extensiveness of its health promoting benefits including improving balance thereby minimizing falls, calming the immune system thereby slowing deterioration and ageing, and promoting new synapse connection, increasing cognitive reserve at any age (RAD, 2013 p. 47).

## Creative arts and dance as community practice linked to well-being and identity

Expressions of culture are essential for people who are unable to fully participate or connect with dominant cultural forms of verbal language or suffer marginalization through disability or sexuality. These may relate to the development of self-expression and self-esteem, to opportunities for social contact and participation providing a sense of purpose, a sense of meaning and improved quality of life (Oliver et al., 1997). Arts programs in the UK since the 1990s are recognized for their ability to enhance healthcare and promote health outcomes such as improved quality of life, increased motivation and reduced levels of depression and anxiety (Arts Council, 2004; Defra, 2005). The results of reviews by the Health Education Authority (1999) and Matarasso (1996, 1997) demonstrated improvements in well-being as indicated by enhanced motivation, greater connectedness to others, more positive outlook and a reduced sense of fear, isolation or anxiety.

Access to dance has more recently increased providing a democratised space for subjugated groups including people with physical and cognitive differences; one that is 'inclusive rather than exclusive' (Lomas, 1998; Benjamin, 2010, p.118). Dance as a practice thus embraces those who are not comfortable in their own bodies such as transsexuals, those who were unable to change gender, the marginalized and displaced. Engagement with dance provides benefits such as knowledge of the body and community participation in the creative act. More recently, *The Conversation* reported research on exercise and dance which helped depression in Syrian refugee communities in Australia (Gross, 2018).

## Conclusion

This paper presented an overview scan of literature including emergent research into dance and well-being, against the context of evolving contemporary dance practice from the late 20th Century. Behrends et al. (2012) comment that empirical research on the specific effects of dance and movement therapy are just beginning to be reported. Other bodies of knowledge potentially relevant to this study, and beyond the limited scope of this paper, lie in the fields of Communication and Media (audience effects and theories of creativity) and Performance Studies. This knowledge is concerned with examining the emotional or empathetic connection to being an audience member, particularly in site-specific and immersive performance. As such, they would also be

pertinent to the research context of investigating creative dance learning for mental wealth and well-being within the Panpapanpalya 2018 congress.

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## Biography

**Cathy Adamek** has a 30-year career as an actor, dancer and choreographer across theatre, feature film, television, streaming platforms and voiceover. She's performed with State Theatre SA, State Opera SA, Australian Dance Theatre, Country Arts SA and many festivals. Alongside, she taught screenwriting, media and communication at UniSA Creative for 15 years. She was awarded a doctorate for her thesis on Adelaide Dance Music Culture which is being published as a book by Routledge UK and

has published and presented seminars and lectures on the topic, nationally and internationally. She is currently the full time Director of Ausdance ACT and voluntary Vice President of Ausdance National. the peak body for dance in Australia.

# When the genesis of dance comes from the child

Clare Battersby, Dance Educator, New Zealand

Liz Battersby, Education Consultant, New Zealand

## Abstract

This paper describes a research project designed and implemented by Clare and Liz Battersby who began by exploring the conference theme of how we can 'explore innovative ways forward that address UNESCO's aims for quality, inclusive and lifelong dance teaching and learning' and subsequently working with a group of 8–12 year-old boys, using a Reggio Emilia 'lens', to explore possibilities through dance. Clare Battersby, a New Zealand-based children's dance educator, is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to children's learning and a strong image of the child underpins her co-constructivist response to the boys' initiative and the evolution of the group. Liz Battersby is a former teacher, lecturer, and primary school principal who now works as an education consultant, mentoring teachers to integrate a Reggio-inspired approach into their practice, is a co-researcher, writer, adviser to the project. Clare planned and she and and Liz discussed and reflected on a series of dance experiences for the boy's group and examined their responses as the boys emerged as protagonists for extending their own dance learning. The discussion in this paper focuses on aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach; in particular, the concept of the environment as the third teacher which was examined through images, video and other documentation of the group's dancing experiences in both built and natural environments. Additionally, through conversations and documenting responses they concentrated on how the agency of the group developed, and the challenges and joys of continuing to find ways to nurture the children's emerging dance identity.

Keywords: identity, trust, agency, co-constructivism, Reggio Emilia

## Methodology

When Clare resumed her Saturday morning creative contemporary dance classes at TAPAC following daCi 2015, the 4 – 7-year-old children who had been part of the project moved on to older children's classes, or to other dance-related interests. As some were keen to maintain their association with Clare and her approach to dance, she continued working with them, incorporating additional children. Soon a new, open-ended, project-based group of ten boys formed. As lead artist and facilitator, Clare led a workshop-based process. Drawing upon methods of inclusive art practice,

site-responsive dance research and improvisational tasking, Clare co-constructed with the dancers (both boys and adults) and creative advisors. Working through shared values and understandings of dance as transformational practice, the group evolved a unique method that works with what each person brings to the project, shaping and refining their input through feedback and feedforward. The workshops involved the creative team in meeting at the sites; sharing and passing on knowledge of place; site-responsive engagement directed by Clare; and choreographic scores created by dancers from different stages of life.

## Previous dance experiences for the boys' dance group

Clare invited a professional male dancer, Adrian Smith, to continue working with the boys, who would initiate an idea that he would extend with them.  Adrian's background is in contemporary dance, circus, acrobatics, improvisation, and capoeira. He has performed with two of New Zealand's leading award-winning companies – Dust Palace, and Touch Compass, a professional, inclusive dance company for disabled and non-disabled dancers.

The group became involved in site work with other dancers at Between the Tides, a Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland festival focused on developing citizens' awareness of aspects of its precious ecosystem. The stage was the local mud flats, comprising mud, sand and sea. The focus was a story about a Taniwha – a Māori mythological creature associated with rivers and the sea. Clare and the boys created a site-responsive narrative loosely based upon the story Parata the Taniwha (retold by Ron Bacon, illustrated by Manu Smith, Waiatarua Myths Vol 3, 2005). The boys were involved in creating a story that would build awareness about human impact on the environment, especially their local environment. They created an improvisational dance score in which their movements depicted the currents of the sea, moving in unison with the ebb and flow of the tide. They created action and reaction movement related to pulling plastic out of the Taniwha's mouth that he had swallowed, so that he could return to his role as Kaitiaki/guardian of the sea.

Attending the Undisciplining Dance Symposium at the University of Auckland inspired a new project when Clare noticed a remarkable tree nearby. She engaged the group in exploring dance in collaboration with Adrian that focused on the trees including a magnificent Red Oak tree with branches stretching across the park and some running along the ground. This work involved taking the boys out of the studio to explore the tree and its park setting. The boys had a shared voice in the work that they created with Clare and Adrian. The dance floor became the branches of the tree. This work prompted an invitation to participate in *Te Hononga: An intergenerational site-responsive performance*. The work related to creative arts professional, Johanna Claus's University of Auckland thesis and was created in collaboration with Clare. The performance at Omaru River linked with The River Talks, held by the Mad Ave Community Trust, which engages in innovative programmes that enhance community cohesion and wellbeing.

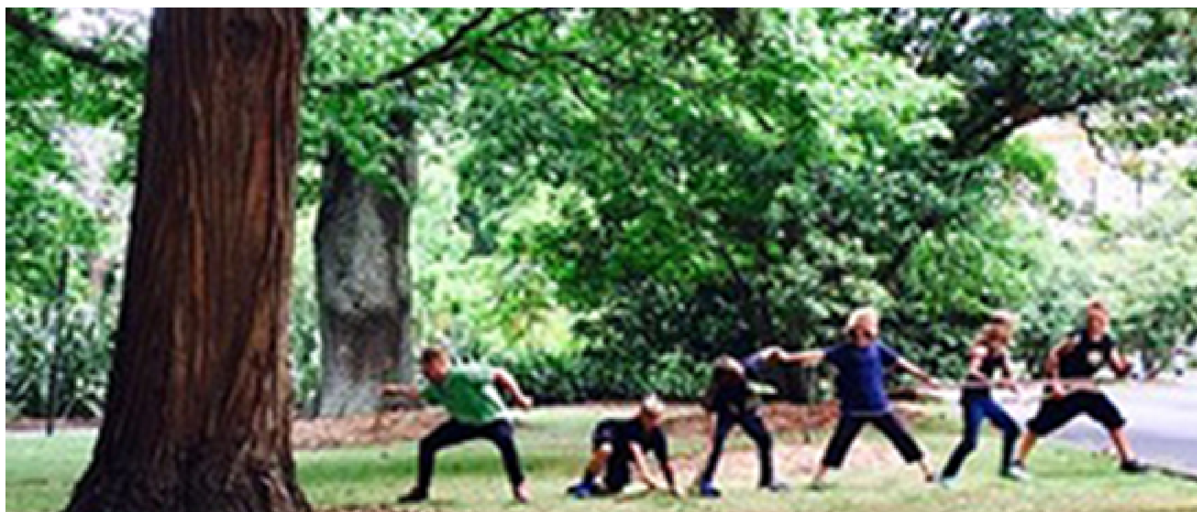

Image 1. The Bark Brothers with Adrian Smith. Photographed by Elizabeth Battersby. ©2019 E. Battersby

As well as Adrian, Clare engaged other creative arts professionals in her work with the boys, expanding the community around them. Antonio Bukhar and Alfdaniels Mabingo, both dancers and dance educators from Uganda, shared their expertise. The group's work was also enhanced through work with Lance Cablk – founder and experiential learning facilitator at Sound Movement Lab, masters dance student Hamish McIntosh and dance student James Lobaton. This extended Clare's professional learning, enabled her to reflect on the group's work together, and took them down different pathways, while the constant remained the group itself. These dancers worked alongside the boys sharing their individual expertise and all held the same intention of sharing their knowledge and experience, while honouring the boys' integrity and contribution as dancers.

## The Reggio Emilia Approach

Clare and Liz reflected on what they discovered about Clare's ways of working with the boys that connect with some of the key Reggio Emilia principles and upon the boys' responses.

## Clare's role – the atelierista

Clare's role is akin to that of an atelierista – a Reggio Emilia teacher with an arts background, whose work with expressive and poetic 'languages' becomes part of the knowledge-building process, encouraging all participants to create and make discoveries together. The atelierista's role emerged from Reggio founder, Loris Malaguzzi's view that teaching is a profession that cannot have a '*small*' pedagogy (Rinaldi & Moss, 2004, p.2). Clare ensured that the group had fresh opportunities for exploring dance in the city, ascertaining viable platforms for their dance learning. Reflecting ideas expressed in her daCi 1997 paper, 'Bringing it out into the open', she thought the platform could be whatever space might intrigue the group. Involving creative arts professionals' echoes Clare's earlier practice as a dance educator and performer in Australia, where she would engage a professional actor to work with

her. When the group shared their learning, it could be seen as a gift to the audience – a way of revealing and celebrating what had evolved from their exploration, from shaping their ideas together, selecting appropriate music and creating a performance. They demonstrated an embodied response when performing for an audience. They had to consider how to make their work more interesting and how they related to each other. All the elements of dance came into play, when performed.

Clare valued the freedom of expression, exploration and opportunity that working with the group gave her to become immersed in an experience and 'drop into' dance. It was satisfying to set up frameworks for them to express themselves in movement through the limitations imposed. She documented their response, ready to offer feedback and to inform her own learning.

## Exploring innovative ways forward

The group's openness to exploring new possibilities, sometimes out of their comfort zone, predisposed them to innovation. Their co-construction of ideas for dance was innovative. While working on performances, they focused on what motivated them, ideas that emerged and what they were invited to be involved in. This was innovative work, as they experienced a sense of space between each other, and a dance space that was open to being influenced by the environment and the people who engaged in workshops with them. As the Bark Brothers they were activated by the natural landscape and as the Urban Activators they were activated by the landscape of the city.

A feature of Clare's approach that supports the exploration of UNESCO's aims for quality, inclusive and lifelong dance teaching and learning is its connection to the notion of pathways. In Australia in the 1990s, when co-constructing performance work with children and invited performers, her mentor was Dr Karen Bond. She described Clare as the caretaker of the environment – a bridge between the children and the environment. Reflecting ideas advocated by Dr Adrienne Sansom, Dr Sue Stinson, and Anne Green Gilbert, Clare sees herself as the link, helping the boys to stay on the path of exploring dance for themselves and who they are as dancers. She hopes that when each boy moves on to new pathways, he will see himself as a dancer who understands choreography and how different functions of dance work. He might have tried a particular style of dance, perhaps finding he is not strong in that form, but willing to try another, emerging as a person who believes I am a dancer; it is part of my identity.

Clare's inclusive approach is innovative, as is her desire to keep the group small, as the relational aspect of the group receives close attention. She likens her approach to that of an inquiry group, with its focus on the curiousness and possibilities of dance. She is averse to notions of a child having to fit in, instead wishing for each child to feel that their whole self is valued. She understands that lifelong engagement with dance will happen, if children have an inner pathway, and that with self-belief and a strong sense of identity they can leave the pathway they are on and find another that resonates with them. Clare's training and background in both drama and dance education contribute to her innovative approach. An early source of inspiration was drama teacher and

academic Dorothy Heathcote, whose notions of the 'teacher in role' and 'mantle of the expert' inform Clare's work. Group members are equals and there is no one star, which helps to attract new group members.

## The protagonists – the boys

The boys' developing role as protagonists for their own learning became evident. While their goals might have differed, they enjoyed the physical aspects of dance and dancing together as a group.

Image 2. The Urban Activators. Photographed by Guy Quartermain (Keyframe Pictures). ©2019 G. Quartermain

Reggio Emilia educator, Carla Rinaldi describes the role and significance of peers and the value of working in a small group as 'a reciprocal relationship that creates a strong sense of solidarity and fosters organisational and self-organisational dynamics from which differences can emerge, and these differences can in turn generate extremely significant acts of negotiation and exchange' (Rinaldi, 2006, p.127).

We observed a reciprocal relationship between the boys and a sense of solidarity that enhanced their growing awareness of a dance identity. We noticed the development of relationships within the group as 'a context in which the co-construction of theories, interpretations and understandings of reality can take place' (Ibid, p.127). Their work became 'a source of cohesion, a space in which thoughts take shape, are expressed and compared with others' different interpretations; new thoughts are generated; meanings are negotiated; and "the hundred languages" can emerge' (Ibid, p.127). Their predominant language was dance.

The relationships within the group provided opportunities for the interchange of ideas. They experienced 'the pleasure of being given back pieces of their own knowledge, enriched, and elaborated on by the contribution of others' (Ibid, p.127). This encouraged the growth of thought, both individual and group. We witnessed

Rinaldi's belief that controversy and the conflict of ideas play a vital part in the process of eliciting 'the significant aspects of individual thought and at the same time giving new meaning to the knowledge-building process' (Ibid, p.127).

Clare was deeply curious about each child's learning within the group and the dynamics of the group that affected learning, especially in the context of movement and dance. She supports Rinaldi's view that coming to understand the child is a long and difficult process, learned only through working alongside children (Ibid, p.127).

## Image of the child

Our understanding of children is closely dependent on our **image of the child**, a pivotal Reggio concept proposed by Malaguzzi. Believing that the image of the child is where teaching begins, he asserted: '*There are hundreds of different images of the child. Each one of you has inside yourself an image of the child that directs you as you begin to relate to a child*' (Malaguzzi, 1994, p.52). Reggio educators' beliefs about the child are crucial to defining children's 'social and ethical identity, their rights and the educational contexts offered to them' (Rinaldi, 2006, p.83). So, it is with Clare, who sees each member of the group as a competent child with 'great potential and desire to explore, construct and learn' (Gandini, 2011, p.6).

## Agency and the hundred languages of children

The Reggio concept of **the hundred languages of children** embraces many forms of expression, including speaking, movement, dance, drawing, painting and music, through which children communicate and learn about their world. When various media are combined to tell a story, they form the hundred languages (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 249). The boys expressed themselves through deep engagement with the language of dance, which became part of their identity. Their sense of identity and their role as protagonists for their own learning contributed to the agency of all group members – enriched through Clare's approach, which comprises both constraint and freedom. Constraint occurred when the boys received direction and tried to meet an external goal set by someone else, usually Clare. They experienced freedom when asked to contribute their ideas, responses, and provocations, or to view what someone else was doing. They experienced choice, authentic challenges and responsibilities, along with many opportunities to interact with others and participate fully. When children can give their opinions or make a choice, when their ideas are respected and have genuine impact, their sense of agency is heightened, for they perceive themselves as having opinions that matter.

The boys were active agents in their own dance learning. Developing their agency involved Clare in listening closely to each child. The Reggio concept of the pedagogy of listening informs her practice. For her, listening closely meant listening with all the senses, gaining each boy's trust, and enabling him to develop his own 'voice'. Her approach ensured that the boys' content was valued and integral to their work together – their dance arose from their own ideas. Parents commented on the boys' trust in Clare, indicating that they understood that their personal agency would be

embraced. That said, she was concerned that sometimes she might inadvertently squash their agency through her actions or words. She likens the complex facets of agency to a dance, with each child on a unique journey, having different levels of experience and reasons for being there and a right to dance. Her reflection on the agency of the group and her role in nurturing this support continuously built trust.

## Nothing without joy

Hope and joy arose in the small city of Reggio Emilia in northern Italy, after the immense suffering of World War Two. The foundation of the Reggio approach is embedded in the phrase nothing without joy. In Clare's work with the boys, nothing without joy encompassed both their delight when engaged in dance together, and when overcoming challenges. There were joys and challenges for each co-constructor. For Clare, the greatest joys included the boys' growing role as protagonists for their own learning, their challenging of stereotypical views – showing that they could engage in both sport and dance if they wished and seeing each boy's emerging potential. There was joy in receiving community encouragement, in parents' willing involvement, in being able to involve exceptional male dancers and performers and in encountering boys who were curious about joining the group.

Clare enjoys engaging in a project with no fixed outcome, focusing inwardly on what might be possible, and upending the assumed spaces for dance. Hence, she and the group explored the dance possibilities of mudflats, parks, trees, and urban built environments. There was joy in engaging deeply with the group – observing them come to life and show their potential through dance. This 'process of "becoming' is 'the basis of true education' (Rinaldi, 2006, p.80). Joy came from Clare's work with and support from colleagues, which she found thought-provoking and could take her out of her comfort zone but stimulated her as a learner. She gained greater confidence as a teacher through collegial interaction with professors of dance, Dr Carol Brown, and Dr Adrienne Sansom; dancer, Cathy Livermore (Pacific Institute of Performing Arts); and co-researcher, Liz Battersby.

There was joy for the boys in having a place to be dynamic and skilful together. A sense of empowerment came from being recognised as having something significant to contribute. They delighted in their connection with Clare, who earned their trust and respect. She saw herself as a conduit for their explorations of dance as a lifelong interest, understanding that they would move on to investigate other dance-related possibilities when ready.

Nothing without joy also encompasses joy that can arise from dealing skilfully with challenges. Determining the curriculum for the group was a challenge for Clare. There were challenges relating to the dynamics of the group, how best to meet everyone's needs and keep them involved and extended, and where they were going as a group. There was the challenge many dance educators confront when others have preconceived ideas about males and dance (Buck and Turpeinen, 2016). There were challenges when the boys' interest in dance conflicted with their busy lives and other interests, particularly sport. There were joys and challenges in preparing for

Panpapanpalya 2018. Clare felt pressure as the atelierista, while wanting to continue enjoying being a teacher. She was aware of individual needs, sometimes wishing for more time to document each boy's ideas. Other challenges related to keeping the boys motivated while extending their dance learning; securing strong male role models to work with them; boys for whom dance was a private matter not for discussing with peers outside the group; being pushed out of her comfort zone as a dance educator; and securing funding and fundraising specifically for boys involved in dance.

The boys faced challenges, too. One boy's best friend did not know what he was doing. Some challenges related to the composition of the group. For example, one boy enjoyed the presence of another boy who was the same age, but was disappointed when he moved to another city. There were challenges in managing their place within the group. When some boys from the same school joined, Clare realised just how much freedom being from different schools had given the original group members.

## The environment as the third teacher

A Reggio Emilia teacher is regarded as a researcher alongside the children, whose relationship with one another, their teachers and the environment itself is essential in supporting their learning. Clare's nurturing of the group's learning reflected this view, as she constructed and co-constructed their learning experiences, drawing on her observations and documentation of them. Consistent with the Reggio approach, she considered '*the existing space in the city as a learning space*' (Gandini, 2011, p.6), as she prepared environments and contexts for learning that responded to the boys' learning dispositions. The Reggio concept of the **environment as the third teacher** encompasses the idea of physical space and its use as provoking encounters, communication, and relationships (Gandini, 2004, p.17). Clare was acutely aware of this, ensuring that she offered the boys both natural and built environments to investigate that were rich with possibilities for provoking for deep learning.

Rinaldi suggests that physical space can be defined as a language that 'speaks according to precise cultural conceptions and deep biological roots' (Rinaldi, 2006, p.64). She says:

> Like every other language the physical space is therefore a constituent element of the formation of thought. The "reading" of spatial language is multisensory and involves both the remote receptors (eye, ear and nose) and the immediate receptors for the surrounding environment (the skin, membranes and muscles). The relational qualities between the individual and his/her habitat are reciprocal, so that both the person and the environment are active and modify each other in turn.
>
> (Ibid, p.64)

Clare and the boys' work in different environments was vital to developing perceptual sensitivity and thought and to deepening relationships.

Rinaldi indicates that:

> The perception of space is subjective and holistic (tactile, visual, olfactory and kinaesthetic). In the shared space, each of us makes a personal meaning of that space, creating an individual territory which is strongly affected by the variables of gender, age and…culture. (Ibid, p.64)

Through Clare's work with the boys, each protagonist would have perceived space subjectively and holistically, making his own meaning of the different spaces he explored through the language of dance. Their explorations of dance in natural and urban environments recalls Malaguzzi's hope that each teacher and child would be an 'inveterate border crosser' (Moss, 2004).

## The child's voice

Throughout the development of the group, from inception to joyful performance at Panpapanpalya 2018, Clare encouraged every boy's voice, listening intently to what each said about his dance experiences. It was vital for her that the environment she fostered enabled them to '*bring their whole self to the space*', which can be seen in their comments about dance.

> Child 1: It feels great. I like dance because you can move however you want. I like how you're free; you can express your feelings in all different ways – happy, sad. If you're feeling angry, letting go [demonstrating with his hands].
>
> Child 2: You can make new friends.
>
> Child 3: I like it that there are no barriers between what you can and can't do.
>
> Child 4: Dancing makes you feel free, like opening a door and turning on a light in the darkness.
>
> Child 5: You can dance in any way you want.
>
> Child 6: You discover new ways to move. You can be creative.

Child 1 often talked to his mother about being in the group, and she inferred a strong sense of agency from his response.

After the group had been exploring dance outside the Auckland Art Gallery, Liz engaged two boys in a conversation that revealed a little of their individual sense of a dance identity, and a growing sense of agency.

Child 3 explained:

> We're recreating the shapes that are unusual to the city we're living in. To be in line with the city, not destructive. People, if they're not really interested in the city, they sort of take it for granted.

When asked if they thought they learned about the city from dancing in the different spaces, they simultaneously agreed that they did, before elaborating on their relationship with the city:

> Child 1: We've learned the ways of the city.
>
> Child 3: How the city works and what it embraces, and what it doesn't embrace. We've also learned what the city doesn't want.
>
> Child 1: And what it does want.

They continued the conversation, both commenting that they would like to explore other spaces in the city.

> Child 3: Really cool places that have new challenges to them and new aspects.
>
> Child 1: Yep.

As these boys began dancing with Clare in her 4–7 year-olds' classes, Liz asked what was different now.

> Child 3: I don't really think we thought about what we were doing. Whereas, now we think about what we're doing.
>
> Child 1: We never really thought about it. We just said, "I'm going to do this, that, done.

Both thought they had gained more control. Child 3 explained why:

> *One – the experience. Also, kind of realising what it is to dance.*

Child 3's sustained engagement with dance and his 'realising what it is to dance' are evident in his writing before participating in Panpapanpalya:

> I will be able to see how other people from other parts of the world dance in their way of dancing. So, we could all dance together, because I think that dancing is an amazing way to express yourself and just be you.

The individual voice of each boy contributed to the group's performance at Panpapanpalya 2018. The work was made through an inter-generational devising process involving dance, music and visual arts. This comprised research into two very different cities – Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland, New Zealand) and Kampala (Uganda). It was a joyful, embodied performance that reflected the growth of each protagonist. The boys were thrilled with the effusively positive response from the audience, which continued for the rest of their time at Panpapanpalya 2018.

Image 3. Urban Activators and their adult male co-constructors perform at Panpapanpalya 2018. Photographed by Linda Knight. ©2019 Linda Knight.

## Conclusion

In aiming to address UNESCO's aims for quality, inclusive and lifelong dance teaching and learning, Clare and Liz believe that the different experiences offered to the boys did indeed explore innovative ways forward. Through Clare and the group's co-constructed work together, along with the pertinent involvement of other artists and educators, they created their own learning community committed to exchanging and exploring ideas, overcoming challenges and finding a 'third space' (Pelo, 2016) for their learning. Dance was significant in helping them 'to define and perceive their own and others' identities' (Panpapanpalya 2018 documentation). Their trust in Clare and the male professionals she engaged was central to their developing sense of agency. The original daCi 2015 protagonists' engagement with dance evolved remarkably, while the Panpapanpalya 2018 group evinced a powerful sense of reciprocity, collaboration, and camaraderie. Their explorations of different environments will leave permanent traces, as they move on to new pathways on what Malaguzzi might have called their 'earthly journey'. He believed that:

> Our earthly journey is a journey we make along with the environment, nature, the universe. Our organism, our morality, our culture, our knowledge, our feelings are connected with the environment, with the universe, with the world. And here we can find the spider web of our life.
>
> (Malaguzzi, L. Retrieved 5/5/18. Reggio Children Planetary Messages website)

Without doubt, these young male dancers exemplified Sansom's profound statement that, '*When the genesis of dance comes from the child, the creative spirit will blossom'* (Sansom, 2009, p.173).

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Thank you to the children who have been members of the Bark Brothers and/or Urban Activators, and their families.

## Biography

**Clare Battersby**, Graduate Diploma Movement and Dance (University of Melbourne); DipTchg (ECE). Clare is known across New Zealand for her expertise in young children's dance. She teaches highly popular dance classes at TAPAC Performing Arts School and dance programmes in early childhood centres, kindergartens and primary schools. Clare and Liz Battersby attended daCi 2015, where Clare conducting a teachers' workshop. With Liz's assistance, she also presented research on young children's engagement with dance in one of her TAPAC classes. Clare received

a Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Local Hero Award and a Dance Subject Association of New Zealand 2017 Life Member Award.

**Liz Battersby**, MA (Hons), Dip Tchg. Liz is a former teacher, lecturer, and primary school principal who now works as an education consultant. She mentors teachers integrating a Reggio-inspired approach into their practice and writes reviews for Reggio Emilia Aotearoa New Zealand (REANZ). She attended daCi 2015 to assist Clare with presenting research on young children's engagement with dance. In 2016, she undertook intensive study in Reggio Emilia to deepen her knowledge about the pedagogical documentation of children's learning. Keen to enhance her understanding of children's dance, she works alongside Clare, examining her approach through a Reggio Emilia lens.

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# Thank you teachers: a personal reflection on, and an account of, dance in my childhood

Dr Joan Pope OAM

## Abstract

Over 40 years ago I attended the inaugural Dance and the Child conference in Edmonton, Alberta, and last year I received the Australian Dance Award for Services to Dance Education. In accepting, I thanked my long-gone teachers. Since then I have come to appreciate the influence these individuals had on me between the ages of five and 15; and later as a student and beginning teacher. Taking a step back, and considering who taught my teachers, I realised my suburban experiences covered significant areas in movement and arts education in the 20th century and placed my teachers in the vanguard of the pioneers.

Their knowledge of Jaques-Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Revived Greek Dance Education and Mime, the Royal Academy of Dance and the use of folk dance in education, all had a role in my childhood learning, unrecognised by me, but appreciated by my teacher-mother. I recall my childhood movement learnings and encourage colleagues to do likewise. How splendid it would be for today's 21st century children to contemplate their dance journeys when they too, like me, are grandma age.

Keywords: teachers, dance, childhood, memories, influences.

## Introduction

In 1978 I was one of a small number of Australians who attended the inaugural 'Dance and the Child' conference in Edmonton, Alberta. What a lot of changes there have been in the world of dance, education, and performing arts during those past 40 years.

Several years ago I was honoured to receive the Australian Dance Award for Services to Dance Education. In my acceptance speech I thanked my long-gone teachers. Since then, I have reflected on the influence those individuals had on me between the ages of five and 15; and later as a student and then as a 'beginning' teacher myself.

Thinking of that first conference I recall being impressed by the address on an historical topic. At first it seemed unusual to have a philosophical speech about the

captive Jewish children at the Terezin-Theresienstadt concentration camp during the Second World War. However, the striking thoughts of the sensitivity, poetic and artistic images of their condemned childhoods were searing and brought into sharp focus the happier privileged lives of other children in those years. I was a child beginning kindergarten only months after war was declared, and my years at primary school covered the same years as those tragic, ill-fated children on the other side of the world.

I remember the singing, clapping, percussion band and rhythm in Miss Robertson's Kindergarten, and then action songs in 'first bubs' followed by similar games in Standard One at Swanbourne School, with Miss Doepel. Claremont Infants' State School had simple folk dances in lines and circles, once a week in Junior Primary school, outside on the bitumen playground, with Miss Langridge.

Most especially I recall the barefoot creative dance classes on Saturday mornings with Miss Fleming and her pianist, Mrs Vincent, who 'made up' such perfect music for our lessons. The classes were in a hall with a nice wooden floor and our annual presentations were held in the University Sunken Garden Amphitheatre. Another strong memory came with special ballet shoes for lessons after school in Perth with Miss Linley Wilson and her team of careful teachers, with a fine pianist, Miss Pat Garrity, who played many excerpts from classical music for our exercises and end of year performances in The Assembly Hall. These had theatrical lighting by Miss Wilson's husband, drama producer Keith George.

## Looking back

Deciding to take a step further back in time, to find out who taught my teachers, I realised my suburban experiences covered significant developments in movement, music and theatre arts in the 20th century that placed these teachers in the vanguard of the education pioneers.Their use of the Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze, the Revived Greek Dance Education of Ruby Ginner, the Mime studies of Irene Mawer, the ballet syllabus of the Royal Academy of Dance, the re-discovery of English country folk dance and music in the earliest years of the 20th century, all had a role in my childhood learnings. This was all unrecognised by me, but well appreciated by my mother, a former primary school teacher. Her own training in 1908 lasted only 6 months at the Claremont Teachers' College but continued by correspondence during her appointments at various 'one-teacher rural schools'.

I obtained her Teacher's Service Records and trawled on-line newspapers to verify the range of physical education and movement initiatives she had taken as a young teacher. Who influenced her then, and later as a mature woman, in the 1920s and 1930s? She clearly endeavoured to read and learn more about teaching singing, folk-dance and 'rhythm' and became an informed physical culture teacher before the days when the term 'physical education' would be in common use. Books she acquired in her teaching years, which are in my possession, include the complete set of early editions of Cecil Sharpe's 1909-1916 *English Country Music* and instructions for Folk Dance, *The Guildhall Books of Dances and Pageants for Children*, sets of 'Action Songs

and Games', percussion band booklets, a 1917 edition of *The Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze*, copies of the *Dancing Times* from the 1920s and Zelia Raye's 1929 *Rational Limbering*.

For Mum, and other earnest young teachers in the 1920s, the advent of the wind-up gramophone and fragile records, opened opportunities to learn about music and dance, even in the absence of regular practical first-hand classes. This led me to realise how some of the major figures of the previous century whose ideas and influences, even second or third hand, permeated educational and artistic attitudes in 20th century Australia. I realised the significance of my mother in selecting and suggesting pathways for me.

In the years immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War, in July 1914, the isolated city of Perth was the administrative centre of Western Australia. At primary school, we learnt about our local history. It was a source of some amusement to me that a woman called Mrs Dance made a symbolic cut with an axe on a tree that was then felled, to mark the founding of our city in 1829.

Through the extraordinary endeavours of some Perth residents, a Teachers' Training College, a Kindergarten Teachers' College, the first high school and a free university were all established by 1913. Interest in education was evident. Although Perth was a great distance from the English and European 'movements' of the time, information was to be found in specialist magazines, *Education Circulars* and *Teachers' Gazettes*.

The return to Perth of Irene Wittenoom in 1918, the first Australian graduate of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, led to her part-time appointment at the Kindergarten Teachers' College, several local schools and the chance to offer adult classes. In 1923–24, Ethel Driver, Mistress of Method, from the London School, toured Australia and New Zealand with two recent Australian graduates, Heather Gell and Cecilia John. My Mum, with many of her senior colleagues and her students from the Teachers' Training College, participated in some weeks of Dalcroze work. Several years later Heather Gell again visited Perth and Mum arranged the children for her Dalcroze Demonstration classes. I realised decades later that this connection was of great benefit to me.

A dance highlight for Perth was the visit of Pavlova in 1927. Interest in Ballet was heightened not only for the classical work and the famous *Dying Swan*, but the beauty of Pavlova's more contemporary, free interpretation of *Autumn Leaves*. The visit came at a good time for the 'School of Dancing and Theatre' recently opened in Perth by Miss Linley Wilson. The daughter of a State Premier, and sister of the Principal of the Kindergarten Teachers' College, she had access to overseas training and was one of the first Australians to qualify for London's Royal Academy of Dance syllabus. One of her young students in the late 1920s was Dorothy Fleming.

The 1930s were an important time in the recognition of women's health and wellbeing, and numerous physical culture schools arose. Mum had the opportunity to train with Madame Alwyn's League of Physical Health and Culture on Madame Lauri's visits to Perth and was soon conducting evening and other classes at which

she incorporated some folk dance and musical rhythmic group movement as well as sensible and practical exercise, for large groups of women. In 1935, when I was born, the ladies of the Physical Culture League presented me with a Christening mug as their 'First Life Member'. Mum continued to be involved with those evening classes. The regulations at that time required her to resign from the Education Department upon marriage when she became Mrs Lawson Gray in June 1934.

During the Second World War there was a need to address not only the health and diet of women but also the importance of young children's well-being. By 1944–45 mum was teaching the National Fitness Keep Fit program, and training other instructors several times a week, with former WA physical education colleague Kath Gordon, at this time the Commonwealth Director for Women and Children's Health and Fitness. Kath was an early University of Western Australia (UWA) graduate and had been a mentor for Dorothy Fleming. With her keen eye for movement, she assisted in the children's' reports which Dorothy provided to parents.

Drawing some threads together thus far along the journey, it is interesting to note the introduction of several major international trends in education and society, and some of the practical applications and growing awareness of these trends in the small city of Perth in Western Australia at the edge of the Indian Ocean. For me, in hindsight, recognising many of the women's names mentioned and their influence upon each other, and upon me as young student, enabled me to produce a woven fabric from those separate threads.

## My memories of learning dance

What could I remember from the years since I was a child in the 1940s? In particular, what was my own movement development and the beginning of what would be called 'learning dance'? What observations had I stored away as memories of such time? Where to start?

Fortunately, the family photo albums in my possession give me an ample resource from babyhood and early childhood, as did the scrapbooks I kept from the age of about 9 years. My parents had kept many of my kindergarten and school reports and certificates of achievements, pasted in a large book leftover from my dad's office. These provided ample opportunities to piece together the journey and in my presentation at the Panpapanalya the 2018 daCi/WDA conference in Adelaide I used images from these sources.

First, I made a montage of family photos documenting samples of childhood experiences and my personal movement and development of gestures. I learned in informal ordinary ways at home, at play, at the beach, in the bush, with relatives and friends, aspects of weight and height, balance and control, speed and space and the qualities of sound, all the basic ingredients for later skills, techniques and understanding one must surely agree.

My photos showed that I crawled 'spider style', how I could stand on a step on one leg with the other foot on the knee of the supporting leg, how I pushed my home-made little barrow of toys; and how at the beach, I balanced and poured water from a little bucket. I observe my delight, pointing with open arms to a high-flying bird. In the next montage, here I am, nearly three, seeing my Easter egg fall overboard as we leave Fremantle wharf bound for the five-week journey to England, and giggling on the donkey ride on the bumpy Clovelly cobblestones. As I look at another photo I can still feel how tightly I held on to dad as the fast pigeons flew in for the breadcrumbs in Trafalgar Square … and there I am on the swing; memories of see-saws, swings and childish scooters.

Later shots reveal a variety of experiences on cars, buses and ferries and long interstate overnight train trips to a big city, or a distant farm; holding our heavy cat; timidly patting a large farm horse; walks in national parks to view waterfalls and tall timber; the coast in rough, windy weather and playing 'Cowboys and Indians' with my big brother, all vivid material to store in a child's memory for later reference in words, music and action, if asked to recreate such scenes. I find it a real base for imaginative creation. We must have experiential 'percepts' before we can form 'concepts' as I can hear my teacher Heather Gell tell me in no uncertain terms many years later.

Childhood movement experiences continued in a more formal setting when in 1939 I began attending 'Alston' Kindergarten in Swanbourne. I remember 'music listening' and sitting on the floor, or little chairs, doing percussion band. We did some skipping

and clapping and singing with Miss Jean Robertson. I was pleased to learn years later that she had studied the 3-year course at the WA Kindergarten College and that Dalcroze Eurhythmics was part of the course. Her teacher was Jean Beith-Wilson (Mrs Vincent) who had returned from London in 1927 as a graduate of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics. She continued the work started by Irene Wittenoom and then Elly Hinrichs, a visiting English Dalcroze teacher for several years. My kindergarten report notes, 'Joan enjoys the rhythm sessions'. Here my Power-point images showed a series of such reports.

A year later a lady called Zelia Raye from London came to our house to visit my mother and discuss her approach to Limbering. She asked if I would be 'her little helper' as she showed Mum some exercises. I remember her unusual name and how she had me lie on the floor and demonstrate different ways of rolling and turning and knee raising and leg stretching. She tied my ankles and knees together with a beautiful silky scarf and I was to try to lift my legs straight up using my tummy muscles 'to be strong'. She left Mum with a beautiful Chinese Drum, a signed photograph, her orange Spanish fringed scarf and a now 'heritage' mask of a Spanish dancer. I still have these treasures.

The following year, 1941, my mother enrolled me in the new dance education classes for children started by Dorothy Fleming, recently returned from her studies in Mime and The Revived Greek Dance at the Ginner-Mawer School in England. Miss Fleming's accompanist was Jean Vincent, the Dalcroze graduate mentioned above. Dorothy was a trained teacher and a 1936 university graduate from Perth, who had been awarded a university travel scholarship to study dance education in the UK. On her return she initiated the ABC Broadcasts to Schools of folk dance, and shortly afterwards developed other national radio programs for children with song, story, poetry and imaginative repertoire which received nation-wide and international attention. She had a very expressive and wonderfully 'encouraging' voice, and her well-constructed Saturday morning classes have been a life-long model for my own teaching. I was also learning the piano, and by 1944 I could manage to play most of the relatively simple piano arrangements of Mum's music for folk dances. I did so at primary school when my sister, a teacher at the same school, needed an accompanist.

After the end of the War my dance life changed direction. New neighbours from interstate arrived and Jenepher, one of their daughters, was a year older than me. Her mother wanted to enrol her in ballet lessons, hoping it would be beneficial for her asthmatic condition. The mothers discussed. The upshot was that we were both interviewed, individually, by Miss Linley Wilson, and accepted, after thorough investigation of our bare feet, legs, posture, height and weight, and a charming little chat with Miss Wilson. It was agreed that we could travel together into the city by the nearby trolley bus and be in the same class after school. We felt very independent and grown up. But we knew our mothers knew the bus timetable and when to expect us home.

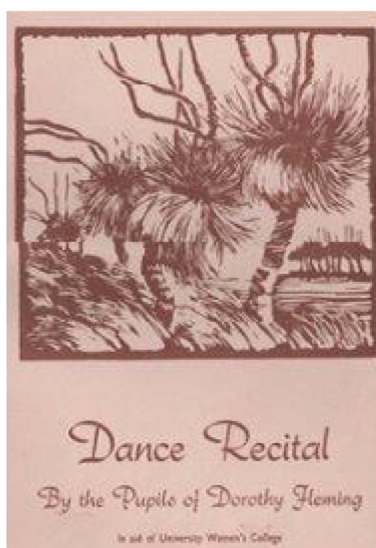
Miss Fleming, having herself been a ballet student of Miss Wilson's at about this age, was very understanding and 'hoped to see me again one day'. I hoped to see my Saturday morning friends again also. So, I made a temporary farewell to her bare-feet, developmentally and educationally progressive exercises, with inclusion of the folk dances and the 'make-up for yourself' sections of mime and creative dance. I will NEVER forget being a Seagull for her, and combining at my choice, elements in any order I liked, and for as many times as I wanted: 'a swoop to catch a fish', a 'diagonal flight across the room', a 'rocking-on-the-top-of-the-waves' bit; and a 'bird standing on one leg'. Mrs Vincent played as she watched. I only found out decades later that she was a fully qualified Dalcroze teacher for whom 'improvising at the keyboard' was second nature. As a child learning 'traditional' piano, I could not understand why she did not need printed music in front of her.

One summer in the mid-1940s the family made the overland train journey to see relatives in Adelaide. I had told Miss Wilson this and she thought it could be interesting for me to attend the summer holiday fortnight of dance with her sister-in-law, Joanne Priest of the Blue Door Studio. This was arranged and I enjoyed the special 'intensive' very much. It was also an opportunity for Mum to introduce me to Heather Gell, over from Sydney where she now lived, to spend time with the teachers who maintained her lovely big 'Music through Movement' Adelaide studio. As a consequence I met one of her teachers, Mary de Crespigny, and had a piano lesson with her about 'how to improvise' and use folk tunes and nursery rhymes to play for movement. I began to understand how Mrs Vincent had been more than an accompanist, but a collaborator in lessons and their joint broadcasts to schools.

THE Linley Wilson
SCHOOL OF DANCING AND THEATRE

ANNUAL REPORT Junior Students

Attendance
Remarks
Recommendations Classes 195 Exams 195
1st Term begins next year
Name
Address



After several years of group ballet lessons, special private lessons were recommended, as we would be preparing for the RAD Exams. I remember the visits of overseas examiners Mme Espinosa and Ruth French. Gradually my feet were introduced to pointe shoes. Costumes for annual performances became more professional and expensive than Miss Fleming's, as Miss Wilson engaged a Wardrobe Mistress who was a splendid tailor and dressmaker. At this time most of Wilson's teachers and assistants were performing in 'The Caravan Ballet' which toured several times a year to nearby towns in country Western Australia. It was impressive to view my teachers so beautifully costumed as they danced Classical excerpts, Minuets, Gavottes, Tarantellas and 'expressive' pieces.

Other tours were possible from interstate and overseas now that the war had ended. Miss Wilson made good use of welcoming dancers and, wherever possible, having her students and staff involved if extra dancers were needed. We children benefitted also, as not only were we invited to see some rehearsals and persuade our parents to take us to the theatre performances, but the dancers came to the studio and gave us lessons.  My impressions of the Spanish dance group led by 'La Joselito' in 1947 and the Indian Temple Dancers, Shivaram and Janaki, a year or so later, were captivating! They encouraged us to try their styles and gestures. This was real, not like 'pretending'.

To see the Borovansky Ballet for every presentation of their seasons in Perth in the mid-1940s, in the grand old His Majesty's Theatre, was memorable. The Spirit of the Rose leaping through the stage window, the beautiful *Bluebird* duet in flight, the fun of *Façade*, and the story ballets like *Coppelia*, were suddenly part of my world. Ballet books were taken out of the library every week and pored over. Jenepher and I took on dance as 'our hobby' and kept large scrap books of programs and every available newspaper cutting about the shows. We sought autographs and sometimes we bought dance magazines. We practised nearly every afternoon in our garden, or along the veranda, 'making up ballets' and dressing up as best we could. Mum even re-subscribed to the *London Dancing Times*.

We thought the Ballet Rambert at the Capitol Theatre was sensational. They showed modern works as well as some classics and we fell in love with all the clever '*Peter and the Wolf*' dancers and tried to emulate them. We were very proud that several of our teachers were invited to join the company and go to England. When Ted Shawn visited in 1947, the impact of the bare-chested strength and quite different body line and gestures of the stylised North American Indian and Egyptian themes presented set us off on another dance history and geography journey.

However, by 1950 when I had completed my RAD Elementary exam, Miss Wilson suggested to Mum that I would make a fine young teacher one day if I could be permitted to join her staff as a junior trainee assistant. I was keen of course, but Mum and Dad carefully explained to me, and to Miss Wilson, that I would be concentrating on school subjects for the next two years and that, with regret, I would not be able to accept her offer. I suspect that the increasing cost of the classes and costumes also had something to do with this departure.

It meant that I was able to return to Dorothy Fleming's and Mrs Vincent's Saturday classes and now, as one of 'the big girls', I was participating in their well-crafted studies and performances of music and movement. In these years Australia was receiving many 'DP's (displaced persons), from war-torn Europe. Miss Fleming saw an opportunity to offer practical help, and extend the range of her classes, by engaging Marina Beresowska and Gundi Sobkowiak to teach us Russian and Polish 'folklorico' and some ballet training based on Russian as distinct from English practice. Remembering that in pre-television, pre-video years, to have such first-hand experiences was the way to enrich repertoire and receive cultural information. Technicolour films were exciting treats in those years and the dancing of Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse and the magic-tragic story of *The Red Shoes* were favourites, although I always wanted to once again see *Fantasia*.Ten years later a number of the names I have mentioned made interesting re-appearances in my life.

After completing school, I accompanied my parents to spend a year in England. Walking past a brass plaque on a building in an inner London suburb, Mum stopped, read it and said, 'It might be interesting for you to see if there are classes you could attend'. The words London Training Centre for Dalcroze Eurhythmics meant nothing to me at all. But inside we were warmly welcomed, and Mum explained her previous contact in Australia in the 1920s. I was given a time table of possible classes I could attend to 'see where I fitted', and if agreeable to the teachers, a suitable fee structure would be worked out. We received the information that Australian Heather Gell was also currently visiting London, teaching while preparing for her higher qualification in Geneva, and would be sure to like to meet us. This occurred and I attended several additional courses at which she and her former teacher, Ethel Driver, were the main instructors. I took part with other students in her production of a 'rhythmic drama', *The Pied Piper*.

I found I was meeting some of the teachers who taught Mrs Vincent, and some who were the original students of M'sieur Jaques-Dalcroze before the First World War. It was living history and their classes were a revelation. The folk dance and anatomy teacher Joan Lawson, became a good mentor (and not only because my name was

Joan Lawson Gray) and arranged further folk dance sessions with Helen Wingrave, suggested joining in the Katherine Dunham Company Classes and an introduction to Ruth French's weekly adult ballet class, the same Ruth French who my mother had seen in the Pavlova Company in Perth in 1927, and who had been the examiner for my Elementary RAD exam. The staff at the Dalcroze Centre made a habit of providing tickets to music recitals and concerts, and telling us about dance, theatre and opera programs and art and museum exhibitions, so I was very quickly involved with the small but friendly group of English and international students following the three-year full-time course. How wonderful to see the Ballet Rambert in their little Mercury Theatre and discover that Madame Rambert had also been a student of Jaques-Dalcroze. The opportunity to see so much more dance at Sadler's Wells Theatre and Covent Garden was grasped and I wrote about it to my friend Jenepher, already at university back home in Perth.

During that year my Perth speech teacher introduced me to Greta Colson, who taught at the Royal Academy, but also offered private tuition in mime, phonetics, speech and drama. I was happy to accomplish, with her advice, the LRAM in Mime. The textbook was that of Irene Mawer and I recognised many exercises from Dorothy Fleming's classes. The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) had a strong folk dance section and I passed the teachers' qualification. It was there that I re-met Zelia Raye, a long-time member of the ISTD. She was delighted that I could now be a member and hoped to see me in Australia when she next visited as an examiner. She still looked as elegant as I recalled her from my childhood, even without the orange silk scarf!

On my return to Australia, I commenced university in Perth, then studied in Sydney for two years with Heather Gell to gain the Licentiate of Dalcroze Eurhythmics. After teaching in a variety of part time Music and Movement, Mime, Speech and Drama positions in Tasmania for a year I came home to Perth and found that I was following Mrs Vincent, now retired, on the staff of the Kindergarten Teachers' College. It was 1959 and she had commenced there in 1929.

## Last thoughts

Concluding these personal reminiscences and in a sense returning to the opening comments about my mother is another tribute to the power of memory, in this case associated with both music and movement. During the mid to late 1980s I was a regular volunteer visiting Retirement Centres and Nursing Homes where I would present various sessions of storytelling, poetry reading and word play, sometimes play the piano and conduct some gentle exercises based on imaginative ideas.

At one such I introduced myself to a group of seventeen seniors, all women, by saying in a spritely way that, 'perhaps I had my mother to blame for my great interest in 'Music and Movement' as she too had been a teacher of those subjects'. One elderly lady called out, 'What was your mother's name, dear?' I replied, 'Mrs Gray'. 'Oh', she responded, 'Mrs Lawson Gray? formerly Miss Ethel Venus?'. 'Quite correct', said I, and waited until the buzz and hum of animated conversation lessened. I then asked, 'How would you have known that?' The resulting explanations were most fascinating. Out of

the group of seventeen, five remembered her as their teacher at the Teachers' College in the late 1920s, and seven others recalled attending her Physical Culture classes in the late 1930s or the Keep Fit lessons of the early 1940s. One lady mused out loud, 'The teacher had a baby quite late in life, I recall'. Well, what could I say but explain that it was me!

The following week I brought to our class my Christening mug and noted that Mum was indeed 44 years of age when I was born. Furthermore, that I remembered just before the war time blackout began, attending one of their evening classes and being allowed to show them my Seagull Dance. Over the next several weeks many details emerged in the 'Retirement Village Residents News'; the colour and fabric of the tunics they wore, how much they paid for the class, and what lovely Brahms Waltzes the pianist played for the exercises as they did side-to-side swaying and turns. It became a remarkable example of shared recollections as these now elderly ladies realised that they knew a little more about each other's past than they expected. It certainly created a wonderful trust between us all. 'If she is Mrs Gray's daughter, she must be alright', seemed to be the general sentiment. What good fortune for me as I plunged into the wonders of creating memorable music and movement and mime experiences for us all.

Left: Undated photo from the Claremont Teachers' College collection. The ladies are not students but teachers with, most probably Emily Ware and Elli Hinrichs (and very likely, my mother!) Teachers' Instruction Course conducted at the WA Claremont Teachers College in the mid 1920s.

Right: Teachers' College 1920 and 1928. Miss Venus standing at right of the student group

## Dancing with my family

Sarah Neville, Adjunct Research Fellow University of South Australia

### Abstract

Since having a family, I have shifted my independent dance practice to dancing with my family, I will explain this through two examples: The first is a Children's Creative Dance and Yoga Class that I run with my daughters for my local community in the Adelaide Hills. The second is a series of "Family in Residence' artist opportunities facilitated through established Arts and Culture organisations. The Children's Creative Dance and Yoga class has been structured in a way so that parents are encouraged to participate: stretch, dance, imagine and play with their children. Whilst this class has not been the focus of any formal study, I have observed the benefits of this activity to include: maintaining fitness, mindfulness and co-ordination, role modeling by parents, strengthening family bonds by dancing together and nurturing cultural appreciation as a family. I have used an 'Family in Residence' model to frame my artistic research for my project, *Weatherlore and Speculative Culture*. There have been over three separate case studies from Port Adelaide to The Flinders Rangers and further abroad to Brussels. Through both my dance and yoga class for my local community and the Artist family in residencies, I have shifted my focus away from independent arts to integrated family activities that frame my arts practice. This shift has expanded my practice to connect my work better with the world I live in and most importantly it keeps me present and immediately responsive to my family and the people around me.

Keywords: community, child development, family, connectivity, embodied learning

### Introduction

Since having a family, I have integrated my life into my arts practice and my arts practice into my life and in doing so found a new level of connectivity to my community and my environment. Through two real world examples drawn directly from experience: First the development of an artistic project. Second a weekly dance class for children and their families. In both examples that took place over a three-year period, I will describe my shift in both artistic practice and way of living. I am not referring to a work/ life balance whereby I find time for my family after my working day is finished, but rather removing the boundaries between work and life so that neither gets in the way of the other nor establishing an integrated work/ life artistic practice.

This change was not without challenges, as until this point in my life I had the freedom as an independent artist to structure time, social activities, solo or collaborative practice at my own will. When working within family time, processes are slowed, priorities are constantly shifting, and achievements and disappointments are shared.

## Artistic practice

I am an independent artist, whose trans-disciplinary practice is grounded in dance. During the period when my children were young, I embarked on an artistic project over three years that focused on *Weatherlore and Speculative Culture*, posing questions about how people share stories about the weather in times of climate change. Concern about the environment and interest in passing on relevant and current stories about our world to my children drove this work. Then, because my family was with me at all times and it was impossible to put my family aside when working on my art, they simply got involved. Likewise, I began a Creative Dance and Yoga class for my children in my community and found that this also became a family endeavour. Over a period of five years, my artistic practice changed to prioritise cultural awareness within home life, a sense of well-being for the whole family and connectivity within the family and within the immediate community.

As to how to best describe this artistic practice: it is an integrated family endeavour. Similar to other family businesses, which are defined by what the family does within a community, my work as an artist seeped into the fabric of the household. Artistic questions are aired at the dinner table; practical considerations concerning the where and why of field work become family outings; our cultivation of our daily food and the way we eat and play together binds not only the family but allows the art to grow. In the words of American feminist Karen Barad; 'We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming'. (Barad, 2007, p. 28)

Hence, I used a Family in Residence model to frame my artistic research for my project, *Weatherlore and Speculative Culture*, and was able to do this over three separate case studies from Port Adelaide to The Flinders Rangers and further abroad to Belgium and Croatia. My first family in residence was seeded through conversations with Nik Gaffney and Maja Kuzmanovic, directors at FoAM (https://fo.am/) in Brussels. FoAM is a cultural organisation, which from 2010–2016 hosted a Family in Residence model for which independent artists were encouraged to apply. This model evolved through recognition that residency programmes are often designed for itinerant solo artists or artists' collectives and are therefore exclusive. In discussion with artists who have young children, the directors at FoAM became aware that it is often difficult to find opportunities where artists can participate in residencies along with their children. In 2010 they began the model of Family in Residence with the intention that children would be encouraged and supported to become an intrinsic part of the workspace.

The separation between life and work wasn't common practice before the industrial revolution (Guest, 2002 p.256; Naithani, 2009 p.148). Now in post-industrial societies such a separation may not be ideal either: there are working parents who see their children only a few hours a day; expatriates and immigrants who have no families to support them; eco-communities in search of new forms of sustainable living for

all ages and many more variations from a simple community model. At FoAM, they recognised the need for families to stay together in whatever form that took, as well as the added value of hosting a family with all the vibrancy and energy and set of diverse perspectives and real-life challenges that are shared with the FoAm community and cultural laboratory. They made arrangements with the families in residence that give the parents the opportunity to focus on their work, while FoAM's collaborators help with looking after the children (Kuzmanovic, 2014).

During my residency, I took care of my five month old baby and simultaneously talked with my collaborators about why I was interested in storytelling and the weather. By necessity my working methodology changed to fit into the rhythm of baby sleeps and feeds as well as adapt to the tempo of European life in respect to eating and sleeping habits. Nik and Maja did more than understand my situation, they changed my whole perception of time and work. In reframing what I had considered a struggle to find time for my art around my families 'needs, I realised that this was not just a phase of life I needed to manage but that my life can positively inform my creative practice [Anonymous, 2013].

Changing the world will always require action and participation in the public realm, but in our time that will no longer be sufficient. We'll have to change the way we live, too. What that means is that the sites of our everyday engagement with nature our kitchens, gardens, houses, cars – matter to the fate of the world in a way they never have before. Pollan, 2013, p. 22.

As the quote above mentions, how we live matters to the fate of the world, and as a cultural operator FoAM see it as their role to explore ways of living and working as creative processes. At FoAM they prefer to put the artwork, the artists and all the elements that make up the arts organisation itself into the same pressure-cooker of daily life and see what comes out. So rather than lamenting that I could no longer sit in front of my computer for hours, researching and dreaming up projects to work on with performers someday in the future, I embraced the richness of the creativity at hand by pushing the pram through ancient forests, cooking with my collaborators and enjoying intense dialogues in moments the baby slept.

My second Family in Residence was extended to include my husband and five year old step-daughter for Adhocracy at Vitalstatistix [Anonymous, 2015]. There we practiced enacting a future scenario, whereby our lived experience was contextualised within a Future Forecasting methodology (Candy, 2010 p.47; Kuzmanovic & Gaffney, 2013). I had learnt about future forecasting and experiential futures during my residency in Europe with FoAM. It is a method influenced by futurist and design fiction provocateur, Stuart Candy, and reimagined by FoAM that allows participants to experience possible futures through a staged future scenario complete with speculative design and suggestions for physical interaction and investigation. The idea is that through discussion and reflection participants are better prepared for making decisions about the present. Within this process, I found that my creative drive was by necessity directed into being active in daily life: cooking, playing with the children, caring for our plants and talking to our visitors.

The way this residency was framed as a Family in Residence was not necessarily a comfortable experience for me as an artist, especially within my local artistic peer group, as, at this time, this way of working was still very new for me. Not long ago I sustained my arts practice through the satisfaction of completing tasks in concentrated silence: speaking to people with full focus and clarifying my ideas through theatrical formality. The shift still felt like a quite abrupt change. I found myself serving soup, and giving an artist talk whilst holding private conversations with family members all at the same time and I had to question my personal beliefs about what it really meant to be professional. However, at Vitalstatistix the visiting public were quick to praise the format saying it made them feel at home and made it easy to engage with the topic. Hence, I was still finding my feet in this new methodology but realised that feeling uncomfortable is part of the growth for me as an artist.

The third iteration of these residencies, was at the Oratunga sheep station at the Flinders Rangers [Anonymous, 2016] where the Family in Residence model, which has sustained this research was a great match for this residency. Here, my husband, youngest daughter and I were alone, without any arts facilitators to assist us or guide us in a large sheep station homestead. Interestingly even though we were based in a house domestic rituals were not in focus. The house was beautifully set up to nurture creativity and the landscape and the weather immediately dominated our experience. Our presence as a family definitely softened our relationship with the larger community and experiencing the world through our daughter's senses certainly heightened our observations of the world around us and fed into the richness and depth of our artistic enquiry.

In respect to the success of the family in residence model, whilst all very different over the three stages, we as a family were very happy with the experience. The FoAM model was very supportive and very hands on with help with the baby and engagement with the work. The Vitalstatistix residency allowed us to share this working model with the general public who visited us, and the Flinders Ranges experience allowed for time and space to work deeper on the themes of the work. It goes without saying that for me as the lead artist, I would never have been able to do any of this if my husband wasn't a hundred percent involved and interested in developing his art through painting and sound design. Likewise, if we weren't able to interest the children in the work, then we couldn't have continued in this way. However, from my experience, this method involves the children in the art making so it develops a shared cultural language and cultural appreciation within the family. It gives us a sense of achievement as a family and a shared identity that art making is what we do. We enjoy creating and dancing together, and family connectivity is key. Interestingly my work shifted and changed to encompass the whole family's perspectives and contributions, which has made the work more vibrant. The work developed in a way that I would not have led it by myself, but it became all the more interesting for its fresh perspectives.

Following, I took a similar approach to working and dancing with my family when interacting with my local community. I hosted a weekly Creative Dance and Yoga class for families in a local community hall for preschool and primary school children.

I began this class with two aims: to formalise the dancing and yoga practice I already did with my children at home, and to share my skills as an artist with my local community. When I began my youngest was only two years old; therefore, I scheduled the class in the morning and other pre-schoolers came with their parents. Because of the children's age the parents danced along with the children to encourage them and make them feel safe. Then, three years later, these children started school, so the class shifted to an afternoon time and siblings, younger and older, joined in as well. The class age grew to span between two to nine years, both girls and boys, who joined in with their mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings.

At first, as the children grew older I encouraged them to do more things by themselves or with the other children, thinking that it was my role to guide them to become more independent. However, I had no luck in encouraging the parents to leave the hall because they were reluctant to miss out on the yoga and they really enjoyed dancing with their children. When this happened I realised that the model with families dancing together was the strength of this class. The children's dance class was structured in a way so that parents were encouraged to participate, stretch, dance, imagine and play with their children. Whilst this class has not been the focus of any formal study, I have observed the benefits of this activity to include: maintaining fitness, mindfulness and co-ordination, role modelling by parents, strengthening family bonds by dancing together and nurturing cultural appreciation as a family.

Information gathered through a survey of the regular participants in my classes about the benefits and challenges of this type of class provided the following insights. The children were asked by their parents what they liked about the classes and they all replied that they enjoyed dancing with everyone, including their parents, siblings and friends that they regularly met at the dance hall. The circle of security they observed is best described by child psychologists and educators Glen Cooper, Kent Hoffman, Bert Powell and Bob Marvin (2011, p. 318), which allows the children to feel comfortable rather than nervous around other people, as they are with their family. It was mentioned that the children felt reassured when they can hug their parents in class.

In respect to the educational program provided in the class most of the set activities were recognised by the children as they were repeated from week to week. The children responded to their parent's questions about the class by referring to the tasks they enjoyed; for example, seasonal attunement through imaginative role-play saying "I like feeling like a leaf or the wind or a rainbow." They enjoyed feeling themselves stretch in the yoga warm up and enjoyed feeling freedom of movement in the skill building activities saying, "I feel free jumping through the air." Likewise, meditation time gave the children an opportunity to engage with their inner life. Most importantly the sense of community which developed in the classes the children continued as they enjoyed playing together outside after the class under the big oak tree.

A parallel question was asked of the parents about the benefits and challenges they had observed in the class over the years they had attended with their children. One of the parents remarked that she was happy to find an activity that her and her child could do together since it was common practice for most activities to wait outside if the child was over three years old.

One parent commented, 'I connect with my daughter much better in dance than at sport. She loves holding my hands and spinning around and us laughing together'.

Another expressed gratitude that she could spend time bonding with her children, rather than feeling like the taxi service, whilst another remarked that they felt that they were doing something for the kids and for themselves and counted the yoga as 'me time.' They enjoyed, 'getting involved as it brings out the big kid in me. I can dance around like an idiot which is only usually reserved for at home.' Discussion about the well-being of the whole family came up and due to the level of attention in the physical practice in the class, it was noted that the adults gave themselves permission to being in the moment rather than organizing their families' lives ahead of time. This is also due to the structure of the class whereby I guided the activities, thereby giving the parents a rest from being the primary carer. Lastly and one of the most rewarding points was that taking apart in the class brought out expectant fun, laughs and drama.

The last point is also connected to the challenges that the parents observed, including frustration that things do not always go as planned. Then there can be a delicate struggle when parents want their children to express themselves freely but find that the children are hesitant to move outside a comfort zone in which they only want to mirror their parents(Gergely & Watson, 1996). This was observed with more reserved children, although this behavior does shift over time as the child expands their awareness and the scope of their circle of security to the others. Likewise, in the presence of a parent, a child can more likely be freer in their emotional expression than if they were in a teacher led class. Additionally, all parents remarked how their children took the yoga warm up as an opportunity to climb all over them, which can be frustrating. Taking this feedback on board, we built the climbing into the family exercises.

At the same time, I also surveyed teachers who conduct similar classes in my broader community, where families dance and stretch side by side. Their responses to my question around the benefits and challenges in guiding a family dance and/ or yoga class included similar observations such as allowing the adults time to bond and connect with their children, finding new ways to play and explore together in a way that they can continue at home. They noted that in this way the whole family can practice compassion and respect for others especially in a mixed age class where younger children can learn from older children and vice versa. Following, diversity in output and outcomes provides for a very open and accepting environment. As in my class, other teachers also observed that the parents and carers appreciated having time to stretch, move and express themselves as well.

Whilst the benefits above sound ideal, there are challenges that put these types of classes into context, especially in respect to whom they might suit or appeal to. For example, because adults are generally social, they can at times chat with each other, which is distracting for the children. It can also be difficult for teachers to find dance material and music in particular that resonates with both children and adults. Then it is not unusual for parents to want the educational benefits explained in adult language, which takes up time and is not interesting for children. Lastly, some adults view family class structures as chaotic, loud and unruly. Interacting with your child in public can be

challenging and not everyone wants to do this. In my class, it is rare for a class to finish without at least one child having a 'moment' and sometimes it is my child. In a family class, everyone is in it together and everyone needs to be happy for the structure to adapt to the mood of a student centred class rather than a teacher led class which does suit every parent's goals for an extra curricula activity.

The cohesive element in all the classes is the love of moving together, and as founder of creative body based learning Katie Dawson and her colleagues have found 'A corporeally centered pedagogy invites movement, democratic participation and creative energy.' (2018, p. 5) Educators such as Dawson have found that body-based learning improves understanding of abstract concepts in primary school curriculum such as mathematics. Furthermore there is a wealth of literature on embodied knowledge stemming from the work of cognitive scientists Fancisco Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch (2017) that informs education strategies from the way children learn, to innovating learning through physical play such as the hands on physical manipulation of virtual objects in a science class in cognitive scientist Shaun Gallagher and education expert Robb Lindgren's (Gallagher & Lindgren, 2015 p. 400) meteorite project.

In respect to movement classes for families, there is an academic study by Warburton, Reedy and Ng (Warburton, Reedy, & Ng, 2014 p. 1) in the US, looking specifically at the benefits of this type of work with children in families at risk. Over three years they conducted a study in what they called a relationship-based dance program focusing on connectivity and interpersonal skills, measuring the activity and interest levels of both parents and children. The theoretical underpinnings of this relationship-based work are rooted in attachment theory. Following this path, there is a wealth of information in dance-therapy studies that is also backed up by Bowlby (1973) and those who have developed this theory further by directly working with dance and families, such as (2008 p. 58) Dance therapist Christina Devereaux working with a family through the trauma of domestic violence.

In my classes the children and families would not identify as at risk, nor seeking therapy. Usually they attend because the child likes dance and yoga and the parent is not interested in formalised training or a strict environment like ballet. As I mentioned above, the parents attend because they already enjoy connecting with their child and those who were uneasy in this environment chose not to come back the following week. Although I do see the benefits for children and parents with specific challenges and have used the classes to provide my own children with focus, physical confidence and general physical awareness, my classes are not focused on therapy or designed as a remedy for trauma, rather they are a meeting point for families to come together to enjoy what they already have.

To conclude, through both my dance and yoga class for my local community and the Family in Residence model, I shifted my focus away from independent arts to integrated family activities that frame my arts practice. This shift has expanded my practice to connect my work better with the world I live in and most importantly it keeps me present and immediately responsive to my family and the people around me. As an artist it is very easy for me to fall down an artistic hole and not be responsive

to the immediate world, perhaps 'Dancing with my family' as a methodology, perhaps it is also my remedy?

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## Biography

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# Comparative study of audience attitudes and behavioural intentions to engage with ballet in university

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## Abstract

This paper presents a study which aimed to determine whether experiencing ballet through a workshop or communication program as part of a university physical education class influenced audience attitudes and behavioural intentions towards ballet. Workshop participants in the study performed some choreographed ballet steps before watching the ballet DVD whereas communication program participants shared their thoughts with other students after watching a ballet DVD. The workshop participants were more satisfied with their program, but those in the communication group were more likely to continue performing ballet. In both programs, beginners improved their levels of interest and attitudes over those who had previously taken ballet lessons. However, those who had previously taken ballet lessons showed higher interest, more positive attitudes, and a greater degree of familiarity after participating in the communication program. Previous ballet experience, therefore, affected the students' attitudes and behavioural intentions. It is anticipated that these results will help to improve future programs.

Keywords: ballet appreciation program, attitudes, behavioural intentions, university students, physical education

## Introduction

The Japanese dance curriculum in physical education programs at junior high schools follows compulsory coeducational physical education guidelines, which officially came into force from a government department in 2012 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, 2008). Following the release of this educational policy, academic research into dance education began to increase, which led to the recognition of problems in the implementation of the new curriculum (Nakamura, 2013), including gender bias (Sako, Nagata, Idehara, Sunami & Izaki, 2013). Further studies have suggested the development of teaching materials to solve these problems (Ichikawa & Akiyama, 2013). To put this into context, over the past 100 years, Japanese dance education was provided only to female students in junior high schools. However, during the shift to a gender-equal society in 1989, male students were also able to choose dance as an elective subject (Nakamura, 2013). By

2012, dance had become a compulsory subject for both male and female students in the first and second grades of junior high school (Nakamura, 2013). However, some problems emerged during the 4-year period of implementing the new policy (Nakamura, 2013). In particular, male teachers started to teach dance alongside experienced female teachers, following the increase of dance classes. However, these male teachers had little or no experience in dance or training to teach dance. Additionally, placing genders together in the same class also caused discomfort for some students because they were not used to being in the same class as the opposite sex.

Participants can experience dance in three ways (i.e., dancing, appreciating, and creating), in contrast to other sports activities in physical education settings, where participants can only play or watch. Daigo, Kimura and Sakuno (2015) noted that a practical dance class could include more opportunities to watch dance. Koizumi and Itou (2004) and Tomozoe (2000) also described the importance of various participation methods to encourage students' lifelong interest in sports, such as watching or supporting peers in school physical education programs.

Interactive appreciations based on communication became a main strategy in the art education field because of the influence of 'interactive appreciation' developed by Amelia Arenas, an educator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (Agata & Okada, 2010). A number of studies in museums have shown that programs involving personal experience, such as the workshop program in this study, help people to understand and enjoy art works more deeply (Nozumu, 2003; Okada, 2010). In addition to dance and physical activities, it is necessary to develop theories and methodologies to encourage participants' interpretations and refinements by combining the commentary, workshop, and communication programs.

In university settings, indicators that graduates are educated include not only their knowledge, skills, and competencies, but also their value-semantic determination, that is, achieving readiness that is necessary for self-realisation. (Pugacheva et al., 2008). Deliens, Deforche, De Bourdeaudhuij and Clarys' (2015) recommendations for future physical activity interventions included improving information strategies about on-campus sports activities, cheaper and/or more flexible sports subscriptions and formulas, and including "sports time" in the curricula. Their results show that students develop their lifelong attitude to sports during their time at university. Students will form their own views about the value of sports by participating in sports not only in high school, but also at university if they choose to do so. Some students who hated sports at school may experience a big turning point in their lifelong attitudes towards sports by participating in sport at university because of the valuable contribution of exercise and physical activities to their health.

### *Research questions and purpose*

This study explored what kinds of appreciation programs are beneficial in university physical education classes. The aim was essentially to evaluate a dance appreciation program, including the changes in university students' attitudes and behavioural intentions as audience members. The study compared the effects of two

different ballet appreciation programs, one using a workshop (WS), and one using communication (COM), on students' attitudes towards ballet, and their intentions to watch or participate in it before and after the program.

In a communication-based program, the educator verbally communicates their appreciation to the participants to inspire them (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). For example, common types of exchange in COM programs are conversations guided by the teacher, participants' voluntary comments, or questions for the teacher (Yoshida, 2011). In this study, COM program participants were given time to communicate with each other, with the teacher responding flexibly to the participants' comments while watching a ballet DVD. The program was designed to encourage the expression of participants' feelings through comments and to create an atmosphere where these expressions can occur both verbally and nonverbally (through facial expressions and reactions).

The WS program had two parts. First, the participants physically danced the part of a ballet, and then they watched it on a DVD. Some of the choreography from the ballet was used for physical activity during the program. Most of the workshop program consisted of suggestions and instructions from the teacher to the participants, but there was also an element of nonverbal communication in the participants' reaction to the dancing and DVD. Verbal communications such as questions and responses were confirmed during the practical dancing, but not while watching the DVD. The WS program can therefore be considered less expressive than the communication program. It was hypothesised that the two programs might therefore have very different effects on both attitudes towards ballet, and intention to take part in or watch ballet in the future (behavioural intentions).

The programs in this study are part of a cultural education program; watching physical activities must therefore be designed and organised from an educational and philosophical perspective, especially for ballet. Tanaka (2012) advocated initially managing cultural education in Japan, which will then lead to the participants' enjoyment.

The study, therefore, examined two main research questions:

> RQ1: What are the effects of two kinds of ballet appreciation programs on university students?
>
> RQ2: What factors affect the variations in the effect of the programs, including in particular the participants' past experience of ballet?

## Materials and methods

### *Study design*

This study was quantitative, quasi-experimental, and used a pre-/post-test design.

### *Participants*

The participants were undergraduate students from 12 different faculties at a single university. They were in different years of study, but all attended open beginner and advanced ballet classes in physical education. The students were separated into WS and COM program groups depending on the term or semester in which they attended the class. Those who took the class in the first semester attended the WS, and those in the second semester the COM program. Two beginner classes and one advanced class were provided each semester. Those with no previous experience in ballet were encouraged to take the beginner class rather than the advanced one.

### *Procedures*

The workshop and communication programs were held on July 9, 2014, and October 1, 2014. Both programs studied the ballet *Coppélia* because the story is simple, well-known, and less complicated than other ballet works. The early scenes of the ballet include simple choreography, so the WS participants were considered able to try it easily.

Both groups started the DVD from the first scene where Coppélia, the sculpted, life-sized dancing doll made by Dr Coppélius, was sitting near a window and reading a book. The teacher explained the background to the story following this scene, while fast-forwarding until the participants finished watching the DVD at the last scene where the two main characters are reconciled and happily married. The questionnaire was explained to the participants while the DVD credits were spooled on the screen.

The organiser prepared a communication sheet to ensure that the conversation started smoothly. Personal opinions of acquaintances or authority figures such as teachers can influence people's views (Kanai, 2002). This study, therefore, tried to minimise the difference in teacher influence between the two programs by preparing a commentary in advance and ensuring that the same teacher taught both programs. The prepared topics were: ballet movements and skills; the stage environment (e.g., costumes, lighting, music); the dancers' facial expressions and expressive techniques; *Coppélia's* narrative; previously-known information about ballet, *Coppélia*, or well-known dancers; and the participants' first impressions of watching ballet.

In the workshop program, participants were introduced to the teaching assistants and given an explanation of the class content. They took part in dancing in a scene from the early part of *Coppélia*. They then watched the DVD on a large screen. The survey questionnaire was given to the participants after they watched the DVD and they were allowed to leave the classroom after completing the questionnaire.

The organiser prepared a communication sheet to ensure that the conversation started smoothly. In the COM program, the participants did not have the opportunity to dance. Instead, they were given time to talk together after they finished watching the DVD. The participants could write notes about their thoughts and the information provided by other students during the conversation. The class teacher presented a list of six prepared topics to the participants, who were told that they did not have to talk about these topics, but that they could be used as conversation starters.

The class teacher and assistants aimed to provide opportunities for participants to talk with at least four other participants and also urged the participants to talk to different people in the program about their impressions.

### *Instrument*

The instrument was a survey that explored how participants felt about two aspects of ballet: dancing and ballet (Table 1 below). The survey questions used a seven-point Likert-type scale. All the items used in this study were created by Daigo et al. (2015), who developed an instrument to measure attitudes based on Akuto's (2006) work on attitudes toward advertisements. The survey explored five aspects of positive attitudes and one question about behavioural intentions.

**Table 1.** Instrument to measure attitudes and behavioural intentions.

| Attitude | | How do you feel about watching ballet? | How do you feel about dancing ballet? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude | Favourability | I like watching ballet | I like dancing ballet |
| | | I enjoy watching ballet as art appreciation | I enjoy ballet movement itself |
| | | I am interested in watching ballet | I am interested in dancing ballet |
| | Useful | Watching ballet is useful in everyday life | Dancing ballet is useful in everyday life |
| | | Watching ballet provides useful information about ballet | Dancing ballet provides useful information about ballet |
| | Proactive | I want to encourage others to try watching ballet | I want to encourage others to try dancing ballet |
| | | I want to know about different ballets | I want to be able to dance different ballets |
| | Closeness | I feel a sense of attachment to watching ballet | I feel a sense of attachment to dancing ballet |
| | | I think other people might like watching ballet | I think other people might like dancing ballet |
| | Familiarity | I am familiar with watching ballet | I am good at dancing ballet |
| | | I understand watching ballet | I understand ballet dancing |
| Behavioural intention | | I intend to continue watching ballet | I intend to continue dancing ballet |

### *Statistical analysis*

The corresponding mean values (*t*-test) and repeated measures were used to calculate attitudes and behavioural intentions before and after watching the ballet

DVD. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to test for unequal distributions of participants' past ballet experiences between the WS and COM program groups.

A univariate ANOVA (UNIANOVA) controlling for pre-test scores was used to compare the participants in the two programs. One-way ANOVA was used explored whether program experience was associated with scores on attitudes and behavioural intentions about ballet. Researchers checked whether there were significant differences between the two programs by dividing the whole data set into before and after (ANOVA) before performing an UNIANOVA. If there were standard deviations in the main effect of time (UNIANOVA), an interactive analysis (repeated-measure analysis) was used.

The statistical software used for this study was SPSS Statistics (v. 23; IBM SPSS, Armonk, NY, USA) and AMOS (v. 23; IBM SPSS). The significance level was set as 5%.

### *Ethical issues*

The participants gave their informed consent to the survey being statistically analysed and the results published without any individual identification information.

## Results

### *Sample characteristics*

In total, 57 students participated in the workshop program and 56 completed the pre- and post-test surveys, giving a 98.2% response rate. Most participants were female (n = 52, 92.9%). A total of 67 students participated in the communication program of whom 66 (including 57 female students, 86.4%) provided usable data for analysis, with a 98.5% response rate.

There were no significant differences observed between the two programs in the participants' previous experience of ballet. Both programs included participants who had previously experienced dancing ballet (about half of the participants) and over 10% of the participants were taking ballet lessons at the time of the program. A little over 30% of the participants had no prior experience of ballet lessons. Most of the experienced participants started learning ballet when they were 3–8 years old (Table 2). In total, 56 COM program and 47 WS participants stated that they had watched live ballet and/or watched ballet via the Internet or TV. About 84% of participants in both programs had experienced watching ballet. Seven people in the WS program and eight in the COM program had previously seen *Coppélia*, with no significant difference between the groups. The participants were also asked about their experience of dance other than in physical education classes in school, and Table 2 below shows the results for dance types that had been experienced by more than two participants. There were therefore no significant differences between both WS and COM groups in the participants' experiences of dancing and watching ballet.

**Table 2.** Participants' previous experience of ballet and other forms of dancing

| | WS n(%) | COM n(%) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experience of ballet lessons | | | |
| In the past | 29 (51.8) | 37 (56.1) | |
| Ongoing | 7 (12.5) | 7 (10.6) | |
| No experience | 20 (35.7) | 22 (33.3) | |
| Experience of watching ballet | | | |
| Live ballet performance | 38 (67.8) | 41 (62.1) | |
| Ballet on TV or internet | 9 (16.1) | 15 (22.7) | |
| No experience | 9 (16.1) | 8 (12.1) | |
| No answer | 0 | 2 (3.0) | |
| Total | 56 | 66 | |
| Previously seen Coppélia | 7 (12.5) | 8 (12.1) | 15 |
| Experience of other forms of dance | | | |
| Jazz dance | 7 (12.5) | 7 (10.6) | 14 |
| Cheerleading | 6 (10.7) | 2 (3.0) | 8 |
| Hiphop | 6 (10.7) | 2 (3.0) | 8 |
| Rock/club/street/animation | 3 (5.4) | 4 (6.0) | 7 |
| Japanese traditional dance | 3 (5.4) | 2 (3.0) | 5 |
| Gymnastics | 4 (7.1) | 1 (1.5) | 5 |
| Yosakoi | 3 (5.4) | 1 (1.5) | 4 |
| Modern dance | 2 (3.6) | 1 (1.5) | 3 |
| Dance | 3 (5.4) | 0 | 3 |
| Social/Competition dance | 3 (5.4) | 0 | 3 |
| Fula dance | 2 (3.6) | 0 | 3 |
| Original creative dance | 1 (1.8) | 1 (1.5) | 2 |
| Baton twirling | 2 (3.6) | 0 | 2 |

Notes: WS = workshop, COM = communication

### *Impact of the programs*

The participants were asked to evaluate their satisfaction with the program in response to the question: "How did you like today's ballet class?" (Table 3):

**Table 3.** Comparative analysis of satisfaction.

| | n | SD (mean) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| WS | 56 | 1.049 (6.25) | 0.27* |
| COM | 66 | 0.864 (5.86) | |

Notes: WS = workshop, COM = communication, SD = standard deviation, * $p < 0.05$

Their responses were scored on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all and 7 = excellent). A *t*-test for the average score comparing the two programs showed that the workshop participants had significantly higher satisfaction scores. There were significant differences in familiarity with ballet, intention to take part in ballet, and all attitudes and intention to watch ballet when comparing the pre- and post-tests. There was also a significant difference in intention to take part in dancing ballet between the two groups (Table 4):

**Table 4.** Significant differences in the ANOVA results.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2"></th><th>n</th><th>Mean (pre-post)</th><th>t</th><th>Sig.</th><th>IE: Time (pre/post) t program (WS/COM)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Attitude towards dancing ballet</td><td>Familiarity</td><td>122</td><td>−0.557</td><td>−3.858</td><td>0.000</td><td>0.503</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Behavioural intention (dancing ballet)</td><td>122</td><td>−0.264</td><td>−3.667</td><td>0.000</td><td>0.015*</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Attitude towards watching ballet</td><td>Favourability</td><td>122</td><td>−0.713</td><td>−3.412</td><td>0.001</td><td>0.946</td></tr>
<tr><td>Useful</td><td>122</td><td>−0.557</td><td>−3.619</td><td>0.000</td><td>0.555</td></tr>
<tr><td>Proactive</td><td>122</td><td>−0.764</td><td>−4.040</td><td>0.000</td><td>0.145</td></tr>
<tr><td>Familiarity</td><td>122</td><td>−0.500</td><td>−2.678</td><td>0.000</td><td>0.346</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Behavioural intention (watching ballet)</td><td>122</td><td>−0.273</td><td>−3.000</td><td>0.003</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>

Notes: WS = workshop program, COM = communication program, IE = interaction effect, * $p < 0.05$

### *Comparative analysis by the length of ballet experience*

The participants were classified according to their years of experience in ballet. They were considered to be beginners if they had begun learning ballet in this class, experienced participants were those with less than 10 years of experience, and long-term participants were those who had taken ballet lessons for more than 10 years. An average score was calculated for each attitude before and after the program. There

were no significant differences in level of experience between the two programs, so the groups were combined to compare the differences in attitude scores before and after class. No significant differences were found in attitudes by level of experience. However, beginners had significantly less intention to take part in ballet in the future than the experienced or long-term groups. Beginners were also less likely to watch ballet in future than the long-term group (Table 5):

**Table 5.** Comparison between participants by their previous ballet experience

| | Beginners (%) | Experienced participants (%) | Long-term participants (%) | No answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WS | 20 (35.7) | 14 (25.0) | 22 (39.3) | 0 |
| COM | 23 (34.8) | 13 (19.7) | 27 (40.9) | 3 (4.5) |
| Total | 43 (35.2) | 27 (22.1) | 49 (40.2) | 3 (2.5) |

Notes: WS = workshop, COM = communication

There was a significant difference in the ‘favourability’ attitude towards dancing ballet between beginners and experienced participants in the workshop program, and also between beginners and the long-term group. However, no significant difference was observed between the experienced group and long-term group, although long-term participants had higher scores for the same items. There was, however, a difference in familiarity with dancing ballet between the experienced and long-term groups. The long-term participants felt more proficient than the experienced participants, but their attitude scores declined after the appreciation program, while those for the experienced participants improved. Beginners clearly improved their favourability attitude for dancing ballet and experienced participants improved their familiarity attitude after completing the workshop program. No significant differences were observed in attitudes towards watching ballet (Table 6):

**Table 6.** Comparative scores among groups with different experiences.

| | Attitude | | Mean score (pre-post) | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WS | Dancing ballet | Favourability | Beginner (−0.75) < Long-term (0.27) | 0.027* |
| | | | Beginner (−0.75) < Experienced (0.29) | 0.021* |
| | | Familiarity | Experienced (−0.14) < Long-term (0.86) | 0.026* |
| COM | Dancing ballet | Familiarity | Long-term (0.19) < Beginner (1.48) | 0.015* |
| | | | Experienced (0.08) < Beginner (1.48) | 0.032* |
| | Watching ballet | Favourability | Experienced (−0.31) < Beginner (1.30) | 0.023* |
| | | Closeness | Experienced (−0.23) < Long-term (1.04) | 0.018* |

Notes: WS = workshop, COM = communication, * $p < 0.05$. Only significant results are shown.

## Discussion

This study measured the improvement in participants' attitudes and intentions to engage with ballet among the students who took ballet in their university physical education classes. About half the participants had previous ballet experience with about 10% still continuing ballet lessons. The finding that over 30% of participants were beginners who had never had a ballet lesson shows that targeting the university's ballet classes can provide a valuable opportunity to survey participants' first experiences of watching and dancing ballet.

The workshop participants showed a higher level of satisfaction, which appears related to the fact that the programs were only delivered once. Thus, the ballet class was not thought of as an educational opportunity, but as a transient and casual event for experiencing ballet, which may have led to the participants' satisfaction, because it was enjoyable to take part in an actual dance experience. General sporting events also positively facilitate places for participants to play (experience) based on this kind of example. However, it must also be considered that participants entertained by sports are not the same as participants taking physical education courses at the university, which are aimed at the practice of lifelong sports.

No significant differences in the participants' attitudes were observed between the two programs, probably because they were programs only offered once. However, the average score of participants improved after the program. It can therefore be said that some effects were confirmed. The result that intention to continue with ballet was significantly improved after the communication program showed that participants' satisfaction after watching ballet on a DVD can lead to feelings of being willing to actually do ballet and wanting to continue practising.

More details were shown by further comparative analysis between the three groups by years of ballet experience. The analyses of all behavioural intentions from the workshop and communication programs show that the experienced and long-term participants' intentions to continue dancing ballet were significantly higher than those of beginners. Beginners' intention to watch ballet, however, was significantly higher than that of the long-term group. In other words, beginners experienced little influence on their behavioural intention from either the workshop or communication programs. This suggests that a single experience does not have enough influence on behavioural intention to affect future activities. However, the improvement of beginners' attitudes (e.g., favourability, proactive, and familiarity attitudes) towards watching ballet was confirmed by Daigo et al.'s (2015) study, which was concerned with a commentary program for university students. The findings suggest that the influence on participants may be lower in the workshop and communication programs explored in this study than in a commentary program.

The workshop program results showed that beginners' attitudes (favourability) towards dancing ballet were improved more than those of the experienced groups. The favourability attitude is a composite score of three items, 'I like dancing ballet', 'I enjoy ballet movement itself' and 'I am interested in dancing ballet''. It can be summarised that a few dance program experiences can lead to a positive influence

on beginners. However, no improvement was observed in attitudes towards watching ballet. The performance of some ballet steps was a main activity of the workshop program, but even if this physical part of the program was a set-up for watching a ballet DVD, watching the DVD did not affect attitudes towards watching ballet.

In contrast, no significant improvement was observed in attitudes towards dancing ballet in the COM program, for any level of experience. The only significant difference in attitudes towards dancing ballet was in familiarity (i.e., whether participants feel they are good at dancing ballet). However, this result was demonstrated by a significant decrease in the beginners' score, so it cannot be said that the program had a good effect on this group. Beginners may not feel good about dancing ballet after experiencing the COM program. When the COM participants watched the DVD, they were expected to pay attention to the bodies and physical skill of the ballet dancers. In the commentary program explored in Daigo et al.'s (2015) study, the impressions of the dancers' movements were strongly shown in its influence on the control group (a group which was exposed to a simple story on a ballet DVD), which was also strongly observed in beginners in this study.

The COM program also did not provide explanations of the story while watching the ballet DVD, so the appreciation situation was similar to the commentary program. We could not directly compare the two because the studies used different ballets, but the COM program shows that it is difficult to change students' attitudes to dancing ballet.

Comparing the improvement in attitudes towards watching ballet in the COM program, the scores increased only for the long-term participants in two attitudes: favourability and closeness. Experienced participants in dancing and watching ballet could be said to have deepened their understanding by talking to the other participants in the program. Some participants also suggested that beginners and long-term participants were not able to enjoy the COM program as much as experienced participants. These feelings could potentially lead to decreased favourability and familiarity. Beginners saw a ballet work for the first time in this program, and may therefore have found it difficult to talk about their thoughts immediately with the other students, many of whom they did not know. Some beginners considered that this was hard. Some long-term participants also commented that they had taken the ballet class because they expected to work independently, so they considered that the COM program did not match their needs. This result supports previous results on behavioural segmentation in art (Kotler, Kotler & Kotler, 2008), which divided museum consumers into nonusers, light users and heavy users. Light users, who visited once a year, tended to prefer group interactive activities.

This article contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the effect of an event can be shown using statistical analysis. The study also showed that educational programs for dance can be classified using previous art education research. A different positive effect was shown for each categorised program. The results show that participants preferred the WS program that included participation. This suggests that some art and sports events should be planned to include such activities to develop understanding of a specific activity. The participants' satisfaction is just

one way to evaluate the events, but the results showed that this type of program is appropriate for one-time events. This study also contributes to developing physical education settings in school-based education. There are always several levels of experience among students in physical education classes so the finding that students' different dance backgrounds can lead to different attitudes and intentions may be useful practical knowledge for teachers. Future research studies can therefore now be designed with a combination of program types in addition to logical or statistical approaches for analysis to broadly evaluate art and sports events.

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# Culturally Responsive Dance Pedagogy – taking the project Global Dance Education to a third level

Ann Kipling Brown, Susan Koff, Jeff Meiners, Charlotte Svendler Nielsen

## Abstract

The research began in 2012 and resulted in several studies and writings about current developments for dance education in the twenty first century. The focus of the research is how dance is experienced and the deeper personal meanings of people staying involved in dance.  Through the implementation of a survey questionnaire and in depth individual interviews, the study examines major learning outcomes of various dance curricula and the study of pedagogical practices to consider: how young people engage in dance and how do these dance experiences contribute to their chosen lifestyles and careers; what dance education experiences are provided for young people in formal, non-formal and informal settings (Keuchel, 2013); and, what is being learned in the experiences provided for young people. The findings proposed key characteristics of dance learning that advocate for the importance of a comprehensive dance education and promote a "culturally responsive dance pedagogy". Therefore, this study addresses what dance experiences are provided for young people and whether those experiences are culturally relevant.

Keywords: dance, education, learning, curriculum, pedagogy

## Introduction

The researchers' journey into young person's dance learning began several years ago and resulted in multiple studies and writings about what is happening and what should be happening in dance education in the twenty first century. Contemporary understandings of dance education and its function in schools and postsecondary institutions have evolved as the art form has grown in depth and popularity. The initial constructions of dance education understood dance training to employ traditional or authoritative approaches where 'the teacher is the authority and the only recognised source of knowledge' (Stinson, 1998. P.27). Today dance educators are aware of the need for inclusive classrooms (Melchior 2009, 2016). Many dance educators trouble traditional teaching practices in dance, merging traditional technique vocabularies with democratic teaching perspectives that value multiple voices in the curriculum, lived experiences as a reliable source of knowledge, and exploration of aesthetic values and their sociopolitical contexts (Dyer 2009). Dance educators are aware of

the need for inclusive classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1995) echoes this argument and asserts that culturally sensitive teachers view teaching as an art and a responsibility to understand and provide for a community with a commitment to engage students in critically reflecting about inequality. Rather than defining culturally relevant curriculum as that which focuses on race, gender, or specific teaching styles, she values a willingness to embrace students' strengths, learn from their knowledge, and motivate students to collective action. Soot & Viskus (2014) confirms that the role of the dance educator today is no longer the teaching of dance steps or a study of dance techniques; instead, the role is one that recognises and supports the unique characteristics of each learner, creating a dialogue between the teachers and learners to think physically and to develop skills in dancing, dance-making and appreciating dance in its many forms.  Many involved in dance education, particularly those in the educational contexts of public school and tertiary programs, recognise the idea that education in and through dance occurs in many contexts and includes many benefits for personal growth as well as skills to have a career in dance. However, in many instances the value of a dance education is often viewed as those experiences attained in traditional western settings and any alternate setting where dance is experienced and learned is rarely acknowledged.

## Survey questionnaire and interviews

It was with these thoughts about dance learning and appropriate pedagogy that we began our research focusing on; how young people engage in dance and how do these dance experiences contribute to their chosen lifestyles and careers; what dance education experiences are provided for young people in formal, non-formal and informal settings (Keuchel (2013); and, what is being learned in the experiences provided for young people. Three investigative phases were conducted in order to ascertain the type of dance learning within formal, informal and non-formal contexts: firstly, a survey questionnaire was sent out to dance educators; secondly, in depth interviews with selected dance participants from the survey questionnaire; and thirdly, an analysis of curriculum documents. In the first two phases, participants were asked a series of questions that delved into their experience in dance and their thoughts about those experiences and what should be offered in a dance education. The interview questions probed deeper into those experiences and asked the respondents to talk more about why dance was an important part of their lives.

We collated and reviewed the responses using: firstly, the Likert scale responses in the survey questionnaire and explanations regarding age, skill and experience; and, secondly, using van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology we reviewed the detailed responses and identified themes that were important characteristics of dance learning. In both situations connecting themes were revealed: Embodiment, Culture, Holistic Development and Communication; revealing that the respondents considered the power of dance in the informal, non-formal and formal settings and the significance of dance in their lives. One respondent summarised the themes, saying 'Dance is an essential part of the human experience; is a means of socializing, communicating, expressing, exercising, developing coordination, enjoyment, teaching, learning, sharing, explaining and emoting' (22). However, the interviews also

revealed a further category, one of disconnect. Each of the interviewees identified that there was a lack of continuity or disconnect between informal and formal dance experiences, that in many cases formal learning contradicted informal learning. For instance, one interviewee identified that previous experiences in dance forms other than western styles were not embraced and that she was not a dancer if she could not perform in those western styles.

## Dance curricula

Alongside the survey questionnaire and interviews we reviewed dance curricula known by the researchers and considered the Study of Standards for International Arts Education (The College Board, 2011). We also reviewed the presentations and notes of the discussion of the Curriculum in Motion sessions, which were initiated at the daCi/WDA Global Dance Summit held in Taipei in July 2012 that involved participants from many different countries. The sessions asked them to share dance curricula experiences and ideas and to consider how countries might learn from each other and work together to shape the development and implementation of a culturally responsive and inclusive dance curriculum in dance education, particularly in schools.

The review of curricula documents and the study of standards and the discussions from the Curriculum in Motion sessions were compared with the resultant themes of the survey questionnaire and interviews. Many commonalities were discovered between the curricula and the respondents' experiences, including the theories shaping the various curricula as well as that some differences existed between curricula in learning outcomes. Participants agreed that it was important to provide well-balanced experiences, clear standards identified and above all an inclusive and socially just education, enhancing the dance experiences of all students. The discussion also included the role of the generalist educator, dance teacher and dance artist in providing experiences and that there were many high-quality programs in formal, informal and non-formal settings providing effective and meaningful experiences in dance for students.

The findings of the survey questionnaire and interviews together with the discussion of dance curricula were reported and presented in the following publications and conferences:

- Kipling Brown, A., Koff, S.R. Meiners, J. & Svendler Nielsen, C. (2014). Dance learning in motion: global dance education *Contemporising the past: envisaging the future. Proceedings of the 2014 World Dance Alliance Global Summit* (http://ausdance.org.au)
- Kipling Brown, A., Koff, S.R. Meiners, J. & Svendler Nielsen, C. (2015). Shaping future directions for dance education *Exploring identities in dance. Proceedings from the 13th World Congress of Dance and the Child International* http://ausdance.org.au/publications/details/exploring-identities-in-dance
- Kipling Brown, A., & Koff, S. R. (2017) Dance Education in Grassroots Dancing. Presented at the *World Dance Alliance-Americas Conference, Dancing from the Grassroots Conference.* Memorial University St. John's, Newfoundland July 23–28.

## Culturally responsive dance pedagogy

Specific qualities were identified in the themes from the survey questionnaire and interviews and demonstrate clearly what can be learned in, through and about dance. Respondents mentioned the physical skills that could be learned through dance; however, the main responses involved those life skills of confidence, self-awareness and expression, responsibility and how to connect with others. The respondents valued experiences in different dance forms together with opportunities to perform and create dance. Several talked about incredible teachers and a few mentioned negative experiences that impacted their future in dance. Together with these findings and the review of the dance curricula we felt that it was important to go further with our investigations into dance learning and ask dance educators to share their ideas and practices about dance education today.

Globally there are many variations in models of teaching from the guru-apprenticeship model, the streamlined syllabi model of set exercises that seem to be taught by rote, to the open-ended creative model encouraging self-expression. Moreover, the focus has been on the dance forms and in most educational contexts the forms have been western forms. To date the pedagogical debate has centered on the western construct of movement, skill acquisition and performance in the concert setting. This focus has marginalised students who have different dance experiences or no experiences at all and thus have different practices and expectations of a dance experience.

The importance of pursuing a socially just dance curriculum that includes all who wish to have dance in their lives also involves examining relevant pedagogical practices, thus questioning what type of teaching facilitates participation in dance, but also what type of teaching values dance learning in all its settings? Culturally responsive teaching has been discussed in general education for some time and is closely aligned with various theories and practices of multicultural teaching, equity pedagogy and social justice teaching. Ford and Kea (2009) identify that teachers in culturally responsive teaching attempt 'proactively and assertively to understand, respect, and meet the needs of students from cultural backgrounds that are different from their own' (p.1). In his seminal writing Freire (1970) points out that teaching is a political process – a democratic process that avoids authority dependence. The teacher must learn about and from the student so that knowledge can be constructed in ways that are meaningful to the student. Finke (2000) suggests that when teachers wish to empower their students they '… seek to give "voice" to those who have been silenced and alienated by traditional pedagogical practices that privilege hierarchy, authority, "rigour" and exclusivity, and that value abstract and objective knowledge over subjective and experiential knowledge' (p, 529). Risner and Stinson (2010) instigated the discussion towards critical social awareness as they articulated the limitations of the multicultural movement. This movement resulted in global dance courses, which created some interest and appreciation in non-western dance forms. However, the forms were often glamorised with 'misperceptions about, or disregard for differences in culture, gender, ability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background' (p. 7). Culturally responsive pedagogy is critical because it shifts from what dance forms are being taught or discussed and turns the focus toward the students.

## Culturally responsive dance pedagogy – Researcher's examples

### *Reflections on Culturally responsive teaching by Susan Koff*

I am the instructor for a secondary teaching methods course for dance education graduate students at NYU. This course is required for all students who are pursuing the teacher certification (qualification) to teach in secondary schools in New York State. When I first began as instructor of this course in 2006, I emphasised how to teach Western dance techniques while paying attention to all the issues of the developmental stages of adolescents, health and safety in the classroom and making the content pertinent to these students' lives.

Though I thought my approach was responsible and holistic, I have realised many of the shortcomings over the thirteen years of teaching this course. The largest mistake was the assumption that all the students would teach a Western dance technique. Though I was teaching these students to be responsible to their future students' lives, I was not practicing that very idea in my own teaching. In response to this realization, I restructured the course.

I could no longer assume that these students would be teaching Western dance technique, nor could I assume that they would be working within classrooms with secondary students who come from a Western cultural background. The course then began with the students choosing the dance technique or techniques with which they were most experienced and which were also developmentally appropriate for secondary students. They were to explore the development and background of that technique and the context in which it is currently practiced. Simultaneously they were observing secondary dance classes in a variety of schools throughout New York City.

As a result of these observations and explorations the students were writing several papers:

1. An analysis of the teaching they observed and lessons they gleaned from that observation about the teaching setting, the adolescent behaviors, and all they could perceive in that setting.
2. A reflection of their own past teaching experiences and ideas that they were not aware of at the time of that teaching, as well as a reflection of what they thought they did well, what could have used improvement, and how they were able to adjust that teaching to implement improvements.
3. A thick cultural and historical description of the dance practice they were choosing to teach, so that all elements of the technique made sense as a development of the culture of that technique.

Once these papers were completed, the student structured technique instruction that was appropriate to an adolescent population and clearly contained cultural markers and authenticity to the dance form. They created (within reason) a setting that is culturally congruent with the dance form, and could clearly create an environment that had some reflection on the environment where this dance form is typically practiced. The simplest adjustments in this way, because we were working in a Western constructed dance studio, was to close the mirrors if that was appropriate

to the dance form, and to encourage the students to wear attire and footwear that is also appropriate to the form. Each choice made by the instructor was presented in a manner that was clear and understandable to the adolescent student.

The result of this course is that the students could become Culturally Responsive Teachers. The elements that were emphasised is that no codified form existed to develop their practice, but rather that they must be responsive to both the form they are teaching as well as the students they are teaching and make accommodations throughout the teaching to these elements.

### *Dancing Together by Ann Kipling Brown*

Every Friday morning for ten weeks twelve high school students joined eight third year university pre-service teachers in a dance education course, titled Dance in a Cultural Context in the university education building that sits on Treaty 4 Territory. The course was designed to assist pre-service teachers in planning experiences that explore dance in cultural contexts and in community settings with specific reference to the place of the body as text, gender issues as they relate to dance, and the different roles of dance in lived experience and how dance has been used to enact social change. Each time the course was offered a practical experience where the pre-service teachers could interact with elementary or high school students was initiated. In this instance, a teacher requested that his high school students involved in an Arts Education course asked if the students could take dance at the university, as there was no dance educator in the school.

The high school students from the First Nations groups of Saskatchewan, mainly Plains Cree, had varied dance experience: some performed in their regional and ceremonial dances at powwows, all had participated in hip hop and breakdancing workshops and all enjoyed dancing in social contexts. The pre-service teachers had various backgrounds in dance from ballet, jazz, and contemporary to social and folk dances of their heritage.

In the first meeting of the high school and university students two guests, an Elder and a Grass Dancer, from the Plains Cree First Nations were invited to lead a session devoted to expressions of Indigenous spirituality, history and culture. The session involved a walk on the Treaty 4 land with moments of stillness at natural and artistic landmarks as the Elder talked about First Nations culture. Returning to the dance studio the Grass dancer talked about the significance of dance, described the traditional and contemporary dance forms and performed a Grass Dance. The session ended with the group performing a Round Dance, joining hands to form a large circle, symbolically indicating the equality of all people in the circle. We also identified that the principles of First Nations dance were cultural expression, a sense of community, forming and renewing relationships, importance of the land and celebrating identity and decided that these would be the focus of our dancing together.

The following sessions were planned with practical work, discussion and input from students, the First Nations dancer, the high school teacher and myself; however, there was time for impromptu exchange; for instance, in one session the high school

students asked to learn the tango which they had investigated. What fun that was! At all times our selected principles were considered as the following tasks were explored: viewing, research and discussing selected dance forms from both western and non-western cultures; creating a warm up dance, drawing ideas from the students that focused on awakening, strengthening and stretching the body; explorations led by university students, focusing on one of our principles, and encouraging vocabulary from known and improvised movement; and, a choreography shared with invited guests.

### *Researching pedagogy as curriculum enactment by Jeff Meiners*

My interest in dance education stems from childhood and adolescent experiences that led to past and current work as an educator concerned with social justice along with transforming schools through dance and the arts. In the context of the neo-liberal and globalised idea of national curricula I undertook research that drew on my journey to locate dance as a learning experience in schools whilst acknowledging the low status of dance within and beyond the realm of education. The research question was 'What factors impact on the construction and realisation of an inclusive dance curriculum for all primary school students in Australia? '

I embarked too upon an Australian case study that investigated pre-service generalist primary teachers' (PSTs) enactment of dance across eighteen different public schools and supplied findings that offered insight into their lived experience of the curriculum. The case study captured information about PSTs' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al. 2005) and the discourses they drew on to teach dance in the context of a competitive environment of high stakes national literacy and numeracy tests. The findings revealed that teaching in a diverse multi-cultural Australia presents challenges around the accommodation of differences in contemporary classrooms of massive diversity, a concern expressed by the case study participants who sought appropriate inclusive culturally responsive pedagogies. The PSTs expressed concern for dance pedagogies that meet the interests of diverse faiths and cultures as well as the significant potential of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the new Australian curriculum. The performative nature of dance and the presence of dance competitions emphasising talent align with the complex impact of ballet and associated authoritarian pedagogy as a pervasive hegemonic genre in Australian culture that influences perceptions of dance. In addition, the twenty-first century proliferation of dance on screen via new technologies and access to viewing highly sexualised performance prompts the need for developing critical approaches with students and teachers to facilitate more accessible and socially just dance pedagogies for all young people.

The findings suggest that a curriculum orientation to dance as art includes equal focus on creative learning along with the teaching of technical skills (Smith-Autard 1994). Such pedagogy focuses on empowering learners through critical thinking and problem-solving in making and performing their own dances driven by stimuli appropriate to students' interests. Ongoing study of creative processes within primary level dance education is affirmed by a call for research that scrutinises embodied collaboration between young people and teachers (Chappell 2007). Such

relationships may disrupt pedagogies of control and encourage co-construction towards a 'dialogical and transformative dance pedagogy' (Østern 2009, p. 284).

The pre-service teachers were enabled to voice their considerable funds of knowledge for teaching dance, echoing a call for acknowledgement and use of pre-service teachers' cultural background in teacher education programs to give students 'a sense of ownership and identity in relation to dance' (Russell-Bowie 2013, p. 229). The research provides a deeper understanding of the meaning and function of dance in different contexts and informs the teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate pre-service teaching students in tertiary programs. The research indicates the potential for generalist and specialist teachers to lead cultural change for dance as part of all young people's education.

## Teachers' gatherings at Panpapanpalya

Panpapanpalya, the 2nd joint dance congress of daCi (Dance and the Child International) and the WDA (World Dance Alliance) Global Education and Training Network, held in 2018 in Adelaide, South Australia provided an appropriate opportunity to initiate further discussions with dance educators about what they considered important in dance education experiences for young students as well as appropriate learning for preservice teachers. These discussions and our presentation at the conference provided the chance for us to share our own examples of culturally responsive pedagogy (see previous examples).

Together with the conference organisers we planned three sessions, titled Teachers' Gatherings, in which dance educators from a range of contexts, would be able to share ideas and practices and identify challenges and solutions. Katie Dawson, an internationally renowned consultant in creative learning and drama-based pedagogy, facilitated the first session. This session was body-based and interactive, providing the participants ample opportunity to present and listen to ideas. We, the researchers, were active participants in the sessions as well as documenting the responses to the activities and questions made by Katie. In the final session we continued the discussion with specific questions and a written questionnaire. There was a good attendance at all sessions and the participants provided interesting responses that they were willing to share in our writing about dance education. While we recognise that the responses are anecdotal and there were only a few written responses they do provide further insight into dance learning and the importance of culturally sensitive pedagogy.

In our questions we asked about the dance educators' teaching experiences and found that there was a range of experience from a few years to 55 years in both public and private contexts. Most had received teaching qualifications in tertiary settings with some following studies in alternate training methods. It appeared that in most cases a specific curriculum or syllabus was followed; however, a few teachers described that they created their own curriculum content. Even though there was a range of experience in the groups there was consistent agreement about why they teach dance and what learning takes place in the dance class. They talked about teaching

dance because of their own passion for dance and that dance can be transformative personally, socially and culturally. The teachers articulated that their pedagogical aims were to be compassionate, recognise individuality, have integrity, care and have concern for students' development, encourage and provide an example as lifelong learners. They felt that this would provide support for learning and that students would gain awareness of self physically, socially and emotionally, develop life and creative skills, learn to take risks and nurture a deeper understanding of the world. Teachers also shared their thoughts about challenges that they face in teaching dance, articulating that lack of resources, time, isolation and lack of focus for dance education to be the primary difficulties in providing a truly comprehensive dance education for students. One Australian dance educator provided a powerful lived experience about a child's success:

> I work with children with disabilities and it is in these classes that I have some of my most significant memories. At an arts camp, I worked with a little girl who would not skip. We worked through the creative process and there was no emphasis on developing this skill. Instead we were working to explore each child's movement potential and developing movement phrases for an end of week performance. When on the stage this child skipped for the first time, I remember the smile on her face and her excited squeal.

## Conclusion

The Teachers' Gatherings provided a further opportunity to explore what is happening in dance education. The responses revealed a close connection with the dance learning themes of Embodiment, Holistic Development, Culture and Communication found in the survey questionnaire. Additionally, the teachers' comments about curriculum affirmed what we had found in the examination of dance curricula that there were similarities as well as difficulties in providing a well-balanced and consistent dance program. In all instances, the teachers' pedagogical aims and commitment to teaching and their recognition of the value of life skills learning as well as knowledge about dance and its historical and cultural significance was clearly evident. They were unwavering in their beliefs that a socially just dance experience for students should be provided and that valuing the individuality and interests of their students was of paramount importance. This commitment echoed the writings of scholars who promote culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum that is relevant for students in the 21st century. However, it was also evident that the teachers experience similar challenges in maintaining dance programs with limited resources and lack of support and understanding for the significance of dance in a young person's education. We believe that we need to delve deeper into the questions and observations made by the participants in the Teachers Gatherings in future research. This initiative would support the Copenhagen Declaration (2015) that encourages dance educators "to actively promote the shared goals of arts education for sustainable development in cooperation with UNESCO" (p. 2–3).

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# The influence of dance for disabled young adults

Ruth-Anne J Andrew, Nicole J Reinders, Joseph FX DeSouza

## Abstract

Research into dance has shown it to be an activity that could greatly benefit the disabled community. Participation in community and leisure activities is linked to quality of life (QoL) measures of emotional and physical well-being in disabled populations (Badia, Orgaz, Verdugo, Ullán, & Martinez, 2013; Savage, McConnell, Emerson, & Llewellyn, 2014). In addition, regular participation in dance classes has been shown to have a positive effect on participants' mood (Barnstaple & DeSouza, 2017; Houston & McGill, 2011). A new dance class designed for disabled adults was trialed for ten classes over five weeks with eight disabled young adults. Using some components of community dance, this class also provided the sequential skill-building taught in a typical dance studio. Nine hours of video, three hours of recorded participant interviews, and field notes and team discussions after classes suggest observable progress for individual participants over the ten classes.

Keywords: disability, dance, community-building, young adults, qualitative analysis

## A note on person-first language

There is a prevalent convention of writing about disability in a style referred to as 'person-first language' (PFL) – sometimes referred to as 'people-first language'. Although the phrase has been in use since the 1970s, it did not gain popularity until after the 1983 International Year of the Disabled. In Canada, 'People with disabilities' is the accepted linguistic formulation to refer to disability (Titchkosky, 2001). For the purposes of this paper 'disabled' may refer to physical, developmental, cognitive, or mental health impairments.

The authors reject attempts to adhere to a 'person-first language' (PFL) style of writing. Using PFL reinforces the ableist perspective that disability makes one less than a person (Sinclair, 1999; Titchkosky, 2001). As a disabled person, the lead author agrees with a number of disability rights activists that have found no benefit in using the cumbersome and awkward wording (Collier, 2012). People are described with desirable, attractive, or commendable qualities with the adjective before the noun. We say, 'She's a talented pianist' or 'He's a handsome man'; it would be incongruous for a native English speaker to say "She is a woman with beauty". However, our language generally places undesirable or negative attributes after the noun as something that

may be removed from the person as in 'a person with cancer' or 'a child with a temper'. Speaking of disability as an unfortunate addition to a person infers that the disability is something separate from the person as if an affliction rather than an attribute that is as much a part of identity as ethnicity or gender. In various contexts, I (the lead author) have described myself as Canadian, Italian, autistic, and disabled; none of these descriptions requires the clarification that I am also a person.

This project was inspired by Dance for PD®; a dance program designed for people with Parkinson's disease (PD). Although Dance for PD® specifically targets PD, the incidental benefit was the development of a supportive social community that enriched the lives of its participants. Such social engagement is often absent in many populations of disabled young people once they have left school. Our objective was to design a dance class specifically for disabled people that would provide the flexibility of a community class with the learning component of a typical dance class. This paper outlines this dance class and pilot research conducted; from the rationale to the implementation, including preliminary results and recommendations for future studies using this model.

## Introduction

The proliferation of dance classes for a variety of diverse populations supports the concept that dance is for everyone, all ages, all cultures, all abilities. Disabled people – long excluded from the physically-demanding world of dance – are now dancing in professional companies. Further, there are all-abilities classes for disabled and able-bodied children, as well as inclusive adult community dance classes. Despite this progress, opportunities for dance are not available for most disabled young people (Aujla & Redding, 2013). There is a discrepancy between the type of sequential skill-building classes available to able-bodied youth in community-based dance studios and the few inclusive community classes offered to disabled youth, primarily only available in larger cities.

Similar issues of inclusivity have occurred in dance research. Studies strive for uniformity, choosing homogenous populations to reduce variance and reach statistical significance. To this end, most research considers populations according to individual disabilities, including current dance research. For instance, dance programs specifically designed for Parkinson disease (PD) or autism are therapeutic in nature regardless of whether they are labelled therapies; they are designed to address the deficiencies of the targeted population. This study followed a disability rights model, in which disability is rooted in 'disabling social, environmental and attitudinal barriers rather than lack of ability' (Crow, 1996, p. 3). Conversely, the medical model (and most disability therapies and interventions) considers only functional limitations that need to be treated or cured. In alignment with the disability rights model, this study did not identify or label disabilities, nor impose any intent to 'fix' or improve any perceived deficits of the disabled person. By including all disabilities rather than setting inclusion-criteria based on specific diagnosis, this study established a focus on the individual rather than the disability. The research team hoped individual participants would benefit, rather than determining outcomes across a diagnostic label.

Many physical and developmental disabilities are comorbid with other disorders that may not be formally diagnosed. For example, many people with a developmental disorder also have Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), commonly known as dyspraxia; a movement and coordination disorder that affects approximately 6% of the population (Farmer, Échenne, Drouin, & Bentourkia, 2017). Autism has a high comorbidity with bipolar disorder (Weissman, 2011) among other mood disorders. Other concerns are related to disability status as well. For instance, children who grow up with a high level of medical intervention often miss out on typical social development with peers. Physically disabled children often spend more time socialising with adults than other children, particularly if significant medical interventions have caused school absences and lengthy hospitalisations. Children may grow up with social deficits that are not severe enough to warrant a diagnosis but will impair their social functioning in adolescence; an important stage for establishing social roles (Strax,1991). For these reasons, a dance class that focuses on one type of disability excludes several people who would otherwise benefit from the experience.

Adults were chosen as the target population because recreational opportunities decline drastically with age, particularly upon school graduation at age 21 (for many disabled Canadians). One of the main tenets of the disability rights movement is ‘Nothing about us without us’ (Charlton, 1998, p 3) so it is important to note that this dance class was designed and facilitated by disabled people (one of which was the lead author), as well as a non-disabled instructor who has studied disability rights. This class was not ‘inclusive’, as inclusivity is an ableist term which implies the inherent normative society as naturally exclusive of disabled bodies. As Dolmage states ‘The body of rhetoric always both constrains and enables’ (2014, p 90). Instead, the class was designed for disabled people and inclusive of able-bodied individuals.

## Methods

Ethical approval for this research study was provided by York University’s Office of Research Services Human Participants Review Committee (Certificate #STU 2017–117).

### *Participants*

The eight participants (5 females) attended a one-hour class followed by Social Time and refreshments for 30 to 60 minutes, twice a week for five weeks. Criteria for participating in the classes were as follows: individuals must (a) be able to follow the teacher’s instructions, with assistance if needed, and (b) *want* to learn to dance. Participant age ranged between 18–28 years with one 50-year-old participant (median age 20.5 yrs). Table 1 lists the pseudonyms of participants, their ages, their relative dance experience and/or level of exercise, and their attendance over ten classes.

**Table 1**

*Participants*

| Pseudonym (gender) | Age | Dance experience/ exercise | Classes attended |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mia (F) | 20 | – ballet and tap ages 4 – 5<br>– cheer leadlng 1 yr ago | 8 |
| Lisa (F) | 50 | – tap and ballet as child<br>– line dancing as adult | 10 |
| Kennedy (F) | 27 | – used to play baseball | 10 |
| Jade (F) | 19 | – walks 20min/day<br>– danced with Wii Dance | 10* |
| Theresa (F) | 20 | – ballet class at 7yrs old<br>– used to bowl | 10 |
| Marc (M) | 28 | plays hockey and basketball | 10 |
| Gary (M) | 21 | attends YMCA 5x/week, 45min – 1hr | 10 |
| Dylan (M) | 19 | – hip hop class at 14yrs old<br>– attends YMCA 2x/week | 4 |

* Left 1 class early due to illness.

Participants were recruited through a service provider's house manager who was asked to forward names of any consumers who would fit the criteria. Once identified, the principal investigator met with participants to explain the study procedures and confirm their interest and eligibility. Nine individuals were proposed, and all were accepted as participants, but one individual could not participate due to a scheduling conflict. Participants were compensated for their time with a $30 gift card.

Classes were held in the exercise room of a multi-purpose building used to provide day programs for developmentally disabled adults. Participants were all consumers of the same service provider responsible for their assisted living situations and most had been involved with the organization's activities. One participant lived independently, and two participants were housemates in assisted living. Dance classes were scheduled at the end of the day's programs to ensure participant privacy. Any support workers and/or visitors in the class were required to participate in the dance exercises. This rule of 'everyone dances' served to reduce any perceived hierarchy that may have existed in the participants' relationships with support workers and researcher(s); everyone present was subject to the same physical exertion and self-expressive exposure.

The research team consisted of the principal investigator (PI), the principal teacher (T1), a second teacher (T2), and a piano accompanist (PA). Both teachers led the classes at different times; each took responsibility for creating choreography and leading class activities. In general, the exercises and activities followed the research

team's collaborative plan, with continual adaptations and revisions as agreed upon through daily discussions and emails. Both teachers coordinated the music with the PA as selections for each exercise were chosen for their tempo, rhythm, and genre. As the classes progressed, the teachers also solicited feedback from the participants to determine what was enjoyable, challenging, or unpopular. While certain modifications stemmed from the team's daily reviews, the participants' input also helped shape the content of the classes.

### *Voice and autonomy*

Throughout the classes, the research team maintained an attitude that respected participant autonomy. T1 set the tone of the classes through her choice of language and correction. Participants were first praised for their efforts, and then given a suggestion. For example, a participant skipping across the room would be told 'I like your arm movements! Can you point your toes?' This non-judgemental atmosphere was consistent throughout all aspects of the dance class. Participants' questions, comments, and stories were heard, and their input respected as their opinions contributed to the class content. Keeping in mind that disabled people – particularly those in assisted living situations – are often disempowered, the research team aimed to foster the participants' autonomy in the dance class and Social Time.

### *Class design*

Certain components of the dance class were included based on the Dance for PD® (DfPD) model: two teachers, live accompaniment, volunteers as needed, a seated warm up, a mirroring exercise, an ending ritual, and Social Time after the class. Our class design included emphasis on dance technique and skills – including terminology – and physical contact in choreography. Although DfPD classes may include physical contact such as holding hands and linking arms, the classes generally do not include the close physical interactions common in choreographed routines of today. There is a tendency to move in directions that are upright, either sitting or standing; given the population and objectives of the classes (i.e. targeting the deficits of Parkinson's disease), there is understandably little use of floor-level movement. For our participants, however, as a younger population with a variety of impairments, floor-level work and physical contact was a key component in fostering teamwork and social connections.

Each week explored a different dance style or theme:

- Week 1: Hawaiian (Disney's *Lilo & Stitch*)
- Week 2: Hip Hop
- Week 3: Latin Salsa
- Weeks 4 and 5: Jazz (Broadway musicals)

Each class provided a short review of previous styles, and the final week was intended to be a review of the previous eight classes. The participants enjoyed the jazz dance introduced in week 4 and wanted to continue. The research team thus expanded the choreography to create a short dance routine to perform in the final class. Table

2 describes the essential dance components in the order they were presented with details of the exercises and when new ones were introduced.

**Table 2**

*Dance class components and description*

| Dance class component | Dance class description |
|---|---|
| Intro | • T1 eased into the class by asking the group in turn around the circle to answer Intro a question about music or dance and give some personal information such as their likes, dislikes, or recent activities<br>• this sharing of 'news' brought the participants into conversation together in preparation for working as a group in class; it promoted a social atmosphere in the group that was particularly important in the first class after the four-day break<br>• when all the participants had arrived and were included in the discussion, the cue to begin class was given to the pianist, the timer was set for one hour, and the class began with the Warm Up<br>• the 8" Time Timer® (Time Timer LLC, 2016, Cincinnati, OH) displays a red disk that disappears as time elapses, providing a concrete visual cue as to how much time is left in the activity |
| Warm up | *seated in a circle, participants visually followed the teachers' example, listening to T1 's verbal description of movements and reminders<br>• 1 explained and demonstrated new exercises and any additions to familiar exercises<br>• all warm up exercises were accompanied by music suited to the type of movement, i.e. slow, fast, dreamy, jazzy, etc.<br>• 'right' and 'left' were not used to designate which appendage to use; participants were told it did not matter which one they used first and were then instructed to use 'the other' |
| *Head and shoulders* | • warm up began with head movements to look side to side, up and down<br>• Head tilted with ears to each shoulder, and in a rolling motion from one side to the other (head down) and back again<br>• movements were done slowly and then slightly faster for a second round<br>• shoulders were next, lifted to the ears and dropped down, both together and then one at a time, and then in a pattern; up, up, down, down<br>• lifted and rolled forward and then backward in circles, first together and then each in turn |

| Dance class component | Dance class description |
|---|---|
| *Arms and torso* | • flowing movements, both arms reached from sides to above head and back down, breathing in on lifting up, breathing out with the downward motion<br>• next, one arm was brought forward and up, circling around back to original position; this was repeated with the other arm<br>• then arms were stretched wide to be brought crossed over the body in a 'selfhug'; the 'hug' was repeated a few more times before all arm movements were repeated in a sequence of two each<br>• next, focus turned to the ribcage which was expanded and contracted, then isolations to each side, and finally the motions put together to "make a circle" repeatedly; expand, side, contract, other side, changing direction and slightly increasing speed |
| *Hips* | • added in Class 4<br>• standing, this followed the same pattern as the ribcage exercise<br>• the hips were isolated to move side to side<br>• then the pelvis was tilted to the front and to the back<br>• then a 'circle' pattern of side back other side front and also in reverse order |
| Feet | *arms relaxed with hands kept loosely on legs above knees Feet<br>• began with tapping toes, then heels, both feet together, switched after each count of 8<br>• switched from toe to heel on each count, increased speed to within each count (" one-and") for one bar of 8<br>• knee movement was added by holding toes in place and moving the heels together to one side and then the other, swaying the knees from side to side to the same counts<br>• one foot at a time, the toes were lifted to move out away from the body, then the heels, then the toes – 'walking' the foot out to the side<br>• the movement was then reversed; toes, heels, toes, heels, 'walking' the foot toward the body back to the starting position<br>• other foot followed the same pattern for the same counts, increasing the speed for the second count of 16 (8 out, 8 back)<br>• using both feet simultaneously for this exercise was suggested and tried at the end of the exercise |
| Legs | • with one straight leg raised off the ground in front of them, participants were asked to 'draw a circle' with their foot, circling the foot at the ankle<br>• then made circles with the whole leg before placing it back on the ground<br>• same movements with the other foot and leg<br>• exercises finished with 'shaking' the legs and feet; running quickly on the spot until the music ended |

| Dance class component | Dance class description |
|---|---|
| Creative group exercise | • in turn around the circle, participants were encouraged to use their own creativity in moving from a 'large' shape – standing, expanded to fill their Group space – to a 'small' shape – low to the ground, contracting within their space Exercise<br>• initial and final shapes were held until everyone had finished their movements<br>• in Class 4, T1 began counting aloud to 8 so each participant would take more time for their movements to reach their shapes<br>• in Class 7, a different creative group exercise was introduced; dancers started in any position but had to complete their movement by somehow connecting with the participants who had gone before them to create one large, connected shape<br>• participants were cautioned to take note of where they were in the sequencing when choosing their ending position as the first participants had to maintain their ending pose longer than those following<br>• this exercise was complicated further in Class 9 and 10 by telling participants to connect to another person in two ways |
| Barre | *chairs were turned for participants to hold onto the backs as a ballet barre; Barre if preferred, participants' walkers were brought to them for support<br>• pliés, tendus, and rises, in both jazz and ballet 1st and 2nd positions were taught in a sequence that increased in complexity over the course of the classes<br>• foot and leg positions were introduced and described in detail – arm positions were also added<br>• an arabesque was added to the end of the barre exercises in later classes<br>• participants were taught to hold onto the 'barre' lightly throughout the exercises; during the arabesque, they were encouraged to try lifting their hands briefly to balance on one leg |
| Travelling | * chairs were moved to the sides against the wall – starting at one end, participants moved across the room in pairs<br>• differences in types of walks were explored as participants moved leisurely or purposefully to the music<br>• ballet and jazz walks were demonstrated and practiced regularly<br>• in Class 3, small bean bags were used on participants' heads as they walked to encourage posture and focus<br>• type of walks and rhythms practiced matched the dance genre the participants were learning<br>• i.e., during the hip hop classes, participants moved across the room in a low hip hop pattern with matching arm movements; during the Hawaiian dance classes. a step-touch-step pattern was used |

| Dance class component | Dance class description |
|---|---|
| Partnering | • in Class 5, participants were paired during the travelling salsa step; Partnering partners held each other's hands while stepping out to each side and back, emphasizing hip movement<br>• in Class 6, basic etiquette of partnering was taught i.e. holding your partner's hands lightly, using slight pressure to indicate direction of movement, counting together, etc.<br>• participants moved across the room in pairs with one partner facing forward and the other backward<br>• in Class 8, a spin was added; one partner spinning the other on a specific count, the other partner would be spun on that count in the next sequence<br>• two participants who used walkers paired together and used their walkers touching to produce the same effect as one walked forward and one backward<br>• their spin consisted of one partner turning their walker in a circle while the other partner waited to continue the movement across the room |
| Mirroring | • mirroring was introduced in Class 3 and then became a regular part of the classes<br>• dancers were assigned partners and positioned themselves around the room, facing each other either sitting or standing (their choice)<br>• one dancer was designated the 'leader' and initiated movements; the other dancer had to make the same movements in a mirror image of the leader<br>• halfway through the allotted time, the roles were reversed so that each participant had time as both a leader and a follower<br>• in Class 10, a group mirroring exercise was used in which the class formed a circle and took turns at being the leader for 8 counts while the rest of the class followed their movement |
| Choreographed Dance | • each week participants were introduced to a new dance form and were taught a choreographed routine in that style<br>• music selection and tempo were chosen to fit the style of dance with the exception of Hip Hop, which required recorded music<br>• exercises and floor work of the class incorporated some of the movements and steps that would be used in the routine<br>• the last 4 classes incorporated a Broadway theme throughout |
| Ending ritual (variation on Pass the Pulse) | • dancers formed a circle standing; if a participant was sitting, the circle was formed according to their position in the room<br>• each participant in turn created their own movements, reflecting their energy, before touching the person next to them in order to 'pass their energy' to that person<br>• it was then that person's turn to dance until they chose to touch the next person and, in this way, the movement or 'energy' passed through every member of the group back to where it had started<br>• all participants then held hands and lifted them in the air before bringing them back down in a group bow<br>• finally, the class applauded to thank the accompanist, teachers, and their fellow dancers |

| Dance class component | Dance class description |
|---|---|
| Social Time | • team members assisted participants to gather their belongings, while offering hand sanitiser<br>• participants moved from the exercise room to the cafeteria area down the hall where 2 rectangular tables had been placed together and covered with tablecloths for participants to sit around<br>• small paper plates were put out along with larger plastic plates of cookies or mini brownies, bowls of potato chips, and a small vegetable tray with dips<br>• two plates of each item were placed at each side and passed to participants to take onto their individual paper plates; napkins were also distributed and left on the table<br>• team members asked participants for their drink preference and poured coffee and tea in 'to-go-cups', placed in front of participants with milk, cream, sugar/sweetener packets, and stir sticks available on the table<br>• participants were asked if they would like assistance with their drinks<br>• cold drinks and fruit juice were available; most participants also drank cucumber water before their hot drink was served<br>• those who did not finish their coffee or tea before the end of social time were given a lid for their cup to take home |
| Exceptions | • in the first two classes, an additional component was attempted<br>• Class 1 included a 'free dance' time with a recorded popular song<br>• Class 2 also included a free dance time, but added a 'freeze frame' game; music was stopped at random points and the participants were required to hold their position at that moment until the music began again<br>• after the first week of classes, these activities were dropped from the class routine |

After agreeing to participate in the dance program, participants met the lead author who explained the study (including participants' rights), provided a picture and biography of the four research team members, answered questions about the classes, and discussed their preferences for refreshments at Social Time. In addition to an informed consent form for the study, participants also signed a general dance class waiver prior to beginning classes. Some participants were given all the information at their initial meeting due to time constraints.

This research was conducted as a mixed-methods study. Seven of the eight participants underwent an electro-encephalography (EEG) with an Emotiv Epoc 2 headset before and after one dance class between the second and fifth week and all were assisted in completing the Positive and Negative Aspect Schedule (PANAS) and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). However, none of the quantitative data will be presented due to technical and practical difficulties in quantitative data precluded any useful information.

Qualitative data were collected through the investigator and teacher's notes, as well as the team's observations discussed after each class. Both were supplemented with video data recorded from a stationary camcorder positioned on a tripod in the corner of the room during class. To avoid bias, the video footage was not viewed until the

program had ended (e.g., to ensure instructional techniques did not change because of watching the videos). A final interview was conducted with each participant between two and three weeks after the final class. Overall, there were nine hours of video data and three hours of audio data, in addition to field notes from individual observations and team discussions. The lead author examined video footage to assess and describe participant progress over time.

## Results

The video footage obtained through the stationary camera provided valuable information about participant progress throughout the ten classes. Although it was not a reliable source of data for all participants (e.g., some class activity was obscured from the camera's view), it was possible to observe changes as the classes progressed. In attempting to assess these changes, the researchers noted they fell into three categories: development in creativity (n=8), dance learning acquisition (n=6), and behavioural/social changes (n=1, visible in all ten videos). For the purposes of this paper, only observable changes in creativity and dance learning acquisition will be discussed.

### *Creativity*

In the absence of a formal assessment tool, the researchers chose to assess changes in participants' creativity using everyone's movements as a baseline. The researchers felt confident that a comparison of both the amount of time participants used as well as the types of movement in the repeated creative exercises would provide a good indication of an expansion of their creative dance abilities. Each participant's efforts in the first classes were compared with their movements in later classes. For example, participants who began the program demonstrating small, timid movements demonstrated progress by making larger, more energetic, and bold movements. Similarly, participants whose movements tended to be big from the start showed progress by the addition of more complicated and intricate movements. In all participants, their use of space was also noted in the assessment of creativity.

The two easily observable examples of participants' creativity took place during the Creative Shapes exercise and the Ending Ritual as participants were each allowed time to perform their own choreography without restriction. The Mirroring exercise also provided the participants with free choice in their movements, but it was difficult to see participants clearly in their random positions around the room as they often obscured others from view. Further, it was not always clear which participant was leading or following the movements of the other, and they were limited by what their partners could see and follow (e.g., they could not move very quickly or turn their head away from the other's view).

### *Group shapes*

Beginning in Class 4, T1 counted aloud during each participant's turn in the Creative Shapes exercise to encourage full use of their allotted time. She counted to or down from eight to provide participants with a tangible model for how long they should

take to change from a small shape to a large shape or vice versa. Counting out their individual time continued after the exercise changed in Class 7 as participants were still allotted eight counts to move into the centre of the circle to create their chosen pose. This exercise gave participants a greater opportunity for creativity since the restrictions of creating a shape that was small/low or big/tall were removed and the only condition was that they must connect to another dancer in some way.

In Class 5, there was an obvious change noticed in all participants; this may have been the natural result of becoming familiar with the class routine. However, slight differences in the participants' creativity were noted as early as Classes 2 and 3. A detailed, class by class, account of the changes observed in the participants' creativity as described above is provided in Table 3. Participants have been assigned pseudonyms to describe their movements as demonstrating a significant variation from their usual or typical motions.

**Table 3**

*Observations in group creative*

| Class number | Class observations |
|---|---|
| Class 1 | • most participants went down to the floor immediately or within 2 counts<br>• most imitated the teachers exactly or with a slight variation in arm position. |
| Class 2 | • two participants, Lisa and Gary, took more time and had greater movement<br>• others were slightly slower but still moved straight down and up |
| Class 3 | (Theresa had requested song from *The Little Mermaid*)<br>• Gary's movements were more elaborate<br>• all participants used more inventive poses |
| Class 4a | • first two participants used 6 counts<br>• T1 began counting down from 8, more participants used full count<br>• more expressive in movements – ex. swaying arms |
| Class 5 | • small to big poses; good variety of poses, participants following T2 showed some similarities<br>• legs were crossed, knees bent, using space in front and behind of their bodies<br>• moving up: 3 participants – 7 counts; 3 participants – 6 counts<br>• moving down: 2 participants – 8 counts; 3 participants – 7 counts; 1 participant – 5 counts<br>• Mia – arms in sync with movements to end with hands together, propped under her chin. |
| Class 6 | • 2–3 participants used full 8 counts; most took 6 counts<br>• greater variety in ending poses<br>• Marc used his usual arm motions; unusual side-lying ending pose with one curved arm raised |

| Class number | Class observations |
|---|---|
| Class 7b | • first 2 participants took full 8 counts or more<br>• second participant used walker, also used walker to connect<br>• next participant also connected to walker<br>• variety of connections used; shoulders, arms, legs, standing up and on floor |
| Class 8 | • Jade asked to be first – lifted arms high and asked for quiet to start by saying 'Ok, let's focus on me right now – or nobody's gonna dance'<br>• Gary used very wide, large movements, walked around to the opposite side of the circle to connect<br>• all held poses after the last connection for an extra four counts |
| Class 9c | • 2 participants volunteered to be first<br>• greater use of varying levels<br>• Kennedy (1st) crawled slowly to sit back on one leg with one knee bent, both hands on floor<br>• Gary – longer time to crouch on one knee, connected with both hands on Kennedy's back<br>• Theresa connected with one hand and her walker<br>• Marc started with his usual hand motions, when prompted, moved arms side to side as well and twisted at the waist to make large, sweeping movements; ended in a crawling position, holding onto walker and touching walker with one foot<br>• good variety of ways to connect; hands, feet, shoulders, backs, walker<br>• spontaneous laughter and applause as shape broke up after completion |
| Class 10 | • Gary was first (as planned in Class 9); wide, sweeping movements Class 10 over his head, palms flat, large steps ended in pose with one knee and hand on floor, other arm extended straight and high behind him with his head bent down<br>• Theresa again connected with one hand and walker<br>• another participant connected with walker and a different dancer<br>• murmurs of excitement and comments as shape grew<br>• excited chatter as dancers moved to the barre exercise, some telling Gary about moves he couldn't see while in his pose |

d. PT began counting aloud for each participant
e. Exercise changed to creation of one large connected shape
f. For Classes 9 and 10, participants were asked to connect in two ways.

By the third week, participants were taking longer in creating their movements and their variations in use of space and speed had increased. Participants also showed a willingness to engage more freely in the group dynamic as they began commenting on their own dancing and gave encouraging feedback on others' performances. As classes continued, participants like Jade – who had initially been reticent and kept a low profile in class – began to engage more openly with the other participants and the teachers. Mia and Marc were two participants who tended towards the same pattern of movements in every class but, as early as Class 5, demonstrated distinct departures from their set routines. In Class 9, Marc altered his pattern immediately upon a prompt

from T1 ('Can you move side to side?'); the transition was seamless as his movement continued in the same tempo and flow.

Of note is how participants chose to connect with each other when the exercise changed in Class 7. With no prior instruction, participants readily chose to connect with Theresa's walker. There was an innate acceptance of the walker as an extension of Theresa's body; this is a concept that is not readily understood and typically must be explained to able-bodied people.

### *Ending ritual*

A similar progress was observed in the Ending Ritual, which was a dance variation on Pass the Pulse. Participants began asking to begin the exercise by the second week. Those who had set 'signature' movements showed increased variety in their movement patterns. In addition to taking longer to dance before touching the next person, participants began to add details to their movements – often using moves that had been practised in class. The authors noticed that in Class 8, Dylan – who had only attended three classes by then – used only two counts before touching the next person. Participants' noteworthy moments of individual creativity observed in the Ending Ritual are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Observations in Ending Ritual*

| Participant name | Moments of creativity |
|---|---|
| Marc | • Class 5 – usual arm motions but took longer, lifted arms higher, and paused before touching next person with two hands – lifting his hands off quickly, as if they bounced<br>• Class 6 – made the touch more ceremonial using both hands, bowed head<br>• Class 9 – usual arm movements, but ended by lifting both arms extended over his head before putting both hands on next person<br>• Class 10 – usual arm movements, bigger and slower, turned with arms high over his head, stopped, then turned back to bend forward to touch the floor before raising his arms high again to touch the next person |

| Participant name | Moments of creativity |
|---|---|
| Gary | • Class 5 – used a version of Marc's move but bigger, wider, arms bent out to sides<br>• Class 6 – balanced on one foot with the other leg lifted behind him, longer arm movements before touching<br>• Class 8 -took 4 counts before touching next dancer; used a motion similar to Marc's but larger, more elaborate movements with wide open arms<br>• Class 9 – performed an elaborate dance with big arm movements, ending with touching next person on their head<br>• Class 10 – large swimming motions, moved forward into centre of circle to reach past and tap person in the wrong direction; when reminded, he continued motion without breaking tempo to touch person on the other side |
| Theresa | • Class 5 – took 6 counts, wider, higher arms<br>• Class 7 – swaying, held one arm curved over head and leaned to the opposite side before touching person next to her<br>• Class 10 – lifted arms high, bowed down to floor and held there, leaned to one side while lifting one arm up to touch next person |
| Lisa | • Class 6 – turned with ballet arms in 5th and 1st positions<br>• Class 9 – large arm movements to turn and used only one finger to touch next person |
| Jade | • Class 7 – usually goes quickly but added an exaggerated 'push' to touch Support Person next to her |
| Mia | • Class 6 – usual arm movements but had one heel 'popped' and intertwined her arms to touch the next person |

## Results

All participants expressed great satisfaction and enjoyment of the dance classes. Participants also wanted to continue the classes and asked when they would start again. Table 5 lists examples of participants' comments when asked what they thought of the dance class and what they liked about it.

### Table 5

*Participant interview quotes*

| Participant name | Participant quotes |
|---|---|
| Marc | 'It was awesome, I really enjoyed iT.'<br>' ... and I'm very happy so thank you very much for picking me' |
| Lisa | 'I like sit down, my feet are moving, my legs side and back, I like that'<br>'Y'know, I like more ballet.' |
| Kennedy | 'You guys made me so energetic, yeah, when I come into dance classes with you guys it just makes me more wanting to do more than just being – just there.' |

| Participant name | Participant quotes |
|---|---|
| Theresa | 'Good! And happy!' 'I liked to sit on the chairs' |
| Gary | 'Uh I want to do it again. Soon.' 'Uh the dance class, I liked everything about it – I like the dancing steps – the one where you pop the hat up, step together, and then you said – hand in – in – look – look – look – front Yeah I like that part ' ' And then when we got all into a weird shape that was fun.' 'When are we going to do another one?' 'Oh yes, 'cause I met some new friends' |
| Dylan | And travelling? Oh my God, that was my favourite. And mirror image [sic] was, like, so interesting. I was, like, laughing in my head, I'm like, oh my God, I can't believe I'm making someone copy me.' |
| Jade | 'I want it to start again.' |
| Mia | 'Really fun' 'I like tap dancing. I like jazz. I like everything. Meeting new people!' |

When asked for their favourite part of class, participants responded most often with The Hawaiian dance, CC step, and jazz routine ('One' from *A Chorus Line*). The 'growing' exercise and 'group shape' were also mentioned as their most enjoyable part of the class. In general, participants were enthusiastic and animated in remembering the exercises and certain moments or events in the classes. When asked, participants reported enjoying the piano accompaniment in class; they felt that the mix of recorded and live music was 'just right', but also could have had more live music.

For their roles, the research team received only positive comments; participants had to be pressed before they would provide comments as to what they would like to be done differently in future classes. Participants' suggestions for improvement were 'more jazz', 'more hip-hop', 'more arm movements', and to 'play more Five Seconds of Summer'.

### *Learning component*

In addition to the physical dance steps and movements taught, the learning component included dance terms, styles, and other concepts related to dance and the body. Prior to beginning the classes, the research team considered that participants might resent being required to follow a regimented lesson in dance when they were used to freestyle recreational dancing. Although the teachers were prepared for some opposition, the participants embraced learning about everything dance-related and enjoyed being challenged. As the classes progressed, the participants learned terminology, positions, counting music, and choreography.

Throughout the classes, T1 also taught participants about anatomy as she pointed out which muscles were being used. Some movements also led to a greater awareness of their bodies, as in the Warmup hips exercise where some participants initially found it difficult to move their hips in isolation. The participants also learned different dance

genres and some dance culture; this was often in connection to their interest in the music selections and, in later classes, reinforced through viewing dance videos during Social Time.

Most participants were eager to show their knowledge after only a few classes and responded enthusiastically when asked to demonstrate *bras bas* or a *plié*. Participants added to their dance vocabulary and knowledge as the classes continued. Table 6 provides a list of the dance terms and concepts introduced throughout the ten classes.

**Table 6**

*Learning component*

| Positions | | Terms/concepts | Dance steps |
|---|---|---|---|
| Upper body | Lower body | warm up | ballet walk |
| bras bas | ballet 1st | flexed/pointed foot | jazz walk |
| arms 1st | ballet 2nd | musical count of 8 | ballet skip |
| arms 2nd | jazz 1st | isolations | hip hop skip |
| arms 5th open | jazz 2nd | jazz hands | gallops |
| arms 5th closed | plié | props | CC step |
| demi bras | tendu | holding for counts | bob and weave |
| arms in partnering | retiré | mirroring | heel-toe/toe-heel |
| - | arabesque | corrections | step-touch |
| - | rises (relevé) | ballet/jazz posture | - |

### ***Social engagement***

In addition to the increase in dance ability, participants showed an increasing willingness to engage with the research team and fellow dancers. Although interaction at Social Time was enthusiastic from the beginning, discussion became more focused on dance-related topics over time. Music was a popular topic, eliciting spirited conversations among all participants. When other questions and topics arose during classes, participants were asked to wait to discuss them at Social Time. Knowing they would have ample opportunity to express themselves after class, the participants were content to wait and class could continue without disruption. Research team members did their best to remind those participants at Social Time in case they had forgotten their queries by then. The communal atmosphere of team members and participants sharing refreshments and engaging in a wide range of conversational topics facilitated the dancers' rapport in class.

As the classes continued, participants began to ask the research team members more personal questions, in particular, there was an interest in their disabilities and other employment (i.e., university). Sharing their individual experiences with disabilities (e.g., pain, mobility aids, etc) provided another connection with the participants,

who often expressed surprise at the similarities. This social experience may be commonplace for able-bodied people, but such interactions are difficult for disabled populations who are limited by a lack of autonomy and agency, among other societal barriers (Hästbacka, Nygård, & Nyqvist, 2016). For example, Kennedy shared a home with Theresa in assisted living, but in her final interview expressed how happy she was to have been able to spend time with her friend. Both women were kept busy throughout their week, and one spent her weekends with her family. As a result, neither had the opportunity to simply share time to chat.

## Discussion and future directions

Participants demonstrated progress in their creativity and dance skills as their movements changed over the ten classes. They enjoyed the challenges of the skills-based lessons and developed their dance vocabulary as well as their general knowledge and appreciation of the art. In addition, the preliminary observations suggest that a longer program with weekly classes over several months could lead to the development of a significant social community for this population. A future study into the benefits of this dance class design should strive to provide a consistent presence in participants' lives to accurately assess these benefits.

Although the qualitative methods used provided valuable insight into the participants' experiences, several improvements could be implemented in further studies to improve their efficacy, such as the inclusion of more cameras placed around the room to eliminate obscured areas. Many of our observations relied on the information provided in the video footage of the classes but certain participants were often out of the camera's view, especially if they were restricted in their mobility. However, observing each participant's activities through nine hours of video over ten classes was time consuming; a lengthier program would entail far more footage and additional camera angles could prove very arduous. One option to determine the progress of individual participants more easily would be to film certain exercises repeated each week with one participant at a time in view. With repeated sequences of the same exercise over time, such as Travelling, it would be easy to assess the level of advancement. Another possible option would be motion-activated cameras to capture participants' movement in areas obscured to the stationary camera's view. For further study, a larger research team could provide additional people to collect video data (thus ensuring more participants are recorded) and assess the footage; multiple appraisers would help to ensure a reliable evaluation of the participants.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, another method to assess participants' perspectives throughout the program would be useful. This could be a simple questionnaire using visual representations of emotions, or a semi-regular verbal checklist with one of the team members. One of the major limitations of this study was the small research team. All four members of the team were involved in every aspect of running the dance class; the PI missed some dance classes and Social Time due to administering tests, while the PA, T1, and T2 were occupied during classes. Continual sharing of information filled in the gaps for the purposes of this study, but more personnel would improve data quality. One difficulty inherent in this class design was the rejection of 'observers'; everyone in the class was actively involved to maintain the social dynamic. However, additional 'observant dancers' would be ideal, particularly

if they were also disabled. If more people were involved in future studies, it would be possible to implement additional qualitative measures and film from multiple angles. This project demonstrated that future studies should continue to be implemented due to the important benefits for participants.

## Conclusion

This paper describes a pilot project dance class over five weeks (ten classes) and results indicate positive outcomes. Participants demonstrated increased dance knowledge and understanding, creativity, and social cohesion as determined through observation. Further programs using this design have the potential to elicit more specific benefits over time. The development of this hybrid class is rooted in a disability rights model and its implementation requires an adherence to principles that exceed its individual components. Whereas most studies identify diagnoses and focus on impairments, our study empowered individuals and focused on abilities. Our dance class was unique in its design for young adults with various disabilities, and skills-based instruction. The potential benefits uncovered warrant further exploration.

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## Biographies

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I co-founded Dancers with PD, a Dance for PD® program, in Cambridge, ON in 2014. My background is in psychology and my current MA disciplines are Neuroscience, Dance, and Critical Disability Studies. I am a member of Joseph DeSouza's lab, where we continue to explore the many neurological benefits of dance and all its possibilities. My relevant experience includes having had two physically and developmentally disabled children in RAD ballet and competitive dance for seventeen years.

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My primary research interest is exploring the effects of recreational physical activity and dance programs for disabled individuals, including young people with Down Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder. I have conducted both qualitative and quantitative research methods and am currently conducting mixed methods research. I have been a dancer and dance instructor for the majority of my life and hope that my research will help to make recreational dance classes more accessible to disabled people.

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# The role of kinaesthetic perception in dance teacher education

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## Abstract

This article outlines a few theories and scholarly writings that underpin kinaesthetic perception and discusses the role of kinaesthetic perceptions in dance teacher education. By linking the dancer's kinaesthetic information to sensorial and creative learning processes, I argue that the sensation of one's movement is the core of the dance teacher's education process. The reflections I bring here are part of the theoretical bases of my master's dissertation, Wondering in movement through Sensorial Co-creation: an experiential approach for dance (Brasilia University, 2018), and part of my presentation for the Panpapanpalya Congress, 2018.

Keywords: kinaesthetic pedagogy, movement, dance teacher training, embodiment

## Introduction

Kinaesthetic perception gives us the sensation of our movements, allowing us to feel them through time, space, and different tonus qualities. During the research period that culminated with my master's dissertation *Wondering in movement through Sensorial Co-creation: an experiential approach for dance* (Brasilia University, 2018), I investigated how the danced movement, experienced simultaneously as a kinaesthetic phenomenon and collaborative process can contribute to new artistic and pedagogical tools to dance teachers training. This article outlines the theories and scholarly writings that underpin kinaesthetic perception within my research and discusses the role of kinaesthetic perceptions in dance teacher's education. By linking the dancer's kinaesthetic information to sensorial and creative learning processes, I argue that the sensation of one's movement is the core of the dance teacher's education process.

As a contemporary dancer, teacher, and researcher of dance and movement, I care about dance's directions and role in society. Since 2010 I have taught practical and theoretical subjects in undergraduate dance education contexts. These experiences have made me aware of the intrinsic responsibility of fostering young people's careers. They have made me especially interested in offering movement education approaches that enable people to dive into their unique and sensitive aesthetic moving and dancing experiences.

Dance teacher education has seen an increasing development as an area of knowledge at Brazilian universities. The first, from the Federal University of Bahia, started in 1956. Currently, there are 27 dance pedagogy and 14 bachelor dance courses, totaling 41 dance higher education courses across the country. They must follow the guidelines of federal and state laws that guarantee and regulate the presence of dance in the Brazilian educational system. From 2015 to 2017, I taught in one of these courses at the Federal Institute of Brasilia – IFB – Dance teacher's program, and as stated in its Dance teacher's program, their aim is:

> (…) to train art teachers capable of disseminating the knowledge of dance in favor of a humanizing and meaningful education, expanding the offer of professionals thus qualified to meet the demand of Brazilian primary education, in compliance with the Law of Guidelines and Basis of Brazilian Education. (Pedagogical Project of the Dance Pedagogy Course, IFB, 2010)

The growing number of university courses has increased the number of studies about the formative processes of these future teachers. Researches in dance education and dance education gatherings, such as Panpapanpalya 2018, are crucial if we want the participation of dance in schools, thus, in society to thrive. As Eeva Anttila states, 'Research in dance education is important in generating deeper understanding of the vulnerable and delicate qualities of dance experiences, especially in dance educational contexts' (2015, p.79).

Isabel Marques (2010), a pioneer of dance education in Brazil, detects that the pedagogical challenge does not lie in one or another specific dance techniques but in creating ways to teach dance that are consistent with contemporary proposals for education. For her, the teacher's view of the body, movement, and education are more decisive than the dance style being taught.

This applies to the present discussion about the importance of learning dance sustained by kinaesthetic processes. Your felt vision about yourself, your moving body, and your presence in the world will determine the performance your teaching will establish in the classroom. It can influence, for example, the teacher's inventiveness, self-knowledge, self-expression, motivation, co-creation, interactivity, diversity, and autonomy.

## 1. Kinaesthetic Perception: the gateway to sensorial movement

This section examines theories and scholarly writings that underpin kinaesthetic perception. By bringing a historical examination of kinesthesia meanings and functions, we can rediscover a space of power for the wisdom coming from movement perception, which is often overshadowed by other organs of perception and silenced by the intellectually dominant form of learning.

In the early twentieth century, British physiologist Charles Scott Sherrington (1906) made the distinction between interoceptive, the activity of internal receptors to pick up stimuli from within the body, and exteroceptive, which refers to the activities of the five senses that capture visual, auditory, taste, olfactory, and tactile information

from the outside world. Tact is a double actor, informing us of the world outside simultaneously as we perceive ourselves being touched by something or someone.

Interoception provides information on the physiological condition of the body to maintain optimal homeostasis (stability of the internal environment of the body), namely: cardiovascular, respiratory, energy (food and glucose), and fluid (electrolyte and water) balance. The parasympathetic system (autonomic nervous system) is sensitive to the mechanical, thermal, chemical, hormonal, and metabolic states of the skin, muscles, joints, teeth, and viscera, informing us of sleep, hunger, and thirst.

The English researcher also named proprioception as one of the interoception functions. Proprioception is singularised by informing the nervous system of the position of our body parts. It is distinguished from exteroceptive perception not only by capturing and transmitting information from within the body but also by having its receptors spread globally throughout the body rather than localised as the exteroceptive senses, except for touch, which extends all over the skin. Another characteristic of proprioception is that it is invisible as an organ but as real and physiological as the other organs of perception as explained by Sherrington (1906):

> The receptors which lie in the depth of the organism are adapted for excitation consonantly with changes going on in the organism itself, particularly in its muscles and their accessory organs (tendons, joints, blood-vessels, etc.). Since in this field, the stimuli to the receptors are given by the organism itself, their field may be called the proprio-ceptive field. (p. 129,130)

Proprioception is closely linked to motricity since almost all its sensory receptors transmit kinetic information. Proprioception sensation associated with movement, as defined before, is called kinaesthetic perception, derived from Greek *kinein*, 'to set in motion,' and aisthesis, 'sensation.' According to Proske and Gandevia (2009), the term *kinaesthesia* was coined by Bastian in 1888.

*Kinaesthesia* refers to the sensations of movement transmitted to the brain by muscles and a set of receptors scattered throughout the body. The totality of our body is affected by this continuous sensory flow, which occurs most of the time unconsciously. Our position, balance, and muscle tone continually adapt to information received from the central nervous system and simultaneously respond and send new information back. Movement perception does participate in conjunction with the other exteroceptive, interoceptive, and nociceptive (related to pain) perceptions during the complex task of managing our movements.

There is a problem with considering proprioception, and thus kinesthesia, only as a body's ability to locate itself in space. We risk distancing ourselves from the existential and living principles present in the moving body. Proprioception allows us to feel who we are and where we are from within. According to the French neurologist J.P. Roll (2000), without proprioception, we cannot differentiate ourselves from others or our immediate environment. It refers to a familiar feeling of being alive or simply of existing as body. It gives us 'self-assurance in some way' (p.1, my translation).

According to French neurologist Allan Berthoz, kinaesthetic perception is our sixth sense organ, 'the sense of movement' (1997, p.86). French researcher Danis Bois, the precursor of *Somato-psychopedagy* and Perceptive Pedagogy of the Movement, quotes author Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836), who, as early as the eighteenth century, claimed that 'the faculty of making a movement and being aware of it is a kind of sixth sense and the only one that makes us feel the relationship that exists between our self and external objects' (Tracy apud Bois, 2008, p. 88, my translation).

Movement and rest information is transmitted to the brain by a set of receptors scattered throughout the body, acting as an inner touch. According to Berthoz (1997), kinaesthetic information travels through sensory and motor transmitters distributed by various organs, forming an accurate internal communication system. The sensory receptors that participate in the sense of movement are formed by exteroceptive receptors – that capture information from the visual and vestibular apparatus (which is the set of inner ear organs responsible for detecting body movements and contributing to maintaining balance), and proprioceptive receptors – skin, joint, and muscle. Together these receptors form the characteristic globality of kinaesthetic perception.

The kinaesthetic function is also involved in the construction of the body scheme. This neuroscience notion refers to an internal dynamic image of the body, present at the neuronal level and in which the feeling of living in a body resides. From this neuronal mapping, we also manage movements unconsciously. It gives us a sense of globality, coherence in the movements, and a feeling of physical existence in the world. In this way, moving forms the basis and means through which we can feel present in ourselves and, at the same time, in the world. This ability to identify ourselves simultaneously as agents and sentients of movement reinforces that our body is us and that when the body moves, we move. According to Danis Bois: 'When I move, something in me says that I am the one moving and not someone else' (2001, p.133).

Finally, Alva Noë bases his philosophical reflections on the moving body. For him, movement is indispensable in integrating other sensory information: 'The world makes itself available to the perceiver through physical movement and interaction' (Noë, 2004, p.1). We could say that movement represents a crossroads for perception: movement relates one sensory modality to others, and it also gives sense to the information gathered by them. Noë assumes that perceptual experience does not happen in the brain, but it is a skillful process that occurs in the person as a whole and depends intimately on the movement of the perceiver.

After delving into the various facets of kinesthesia, coloured by different fields of studies, it becomes more apparent that one of the most extraordinary contributions that dance has to offer to contemporary society is that the art of movement is also the art of kinaesthetic expression. What happens when we approach dance practices from the sensorial movement perspective?

## 2. *Wondering in movement*: a kinaesthetic approach to the danced experience

Within the sensorial dimensions of movement, dancers can engage in the expressions, inventions, and discoveries that emerge during their dancing. In my master's dissertation (2018), I investigated these experiences, which I named *conhecer em movimento* in Portuguese, or wondering in movement in English. I followed the trail of American dancer philosopher Sheets-Johnstone (2011) when she says, 'As one might wonder about the world in words, I am wondering the world directly, in movement' (p.422). In this phenomenological observation, Sheets-Johnstone brings a somatic-performative notion of the unity between being body and being world. If the body's experience of being in the world reveals a profoundly significant state of interaction and discovery, dance can be a field for such findings, wonders, and learnings.

In my dissertation, I came to understand that wondering in movement, in the dance experiences I am involved with, can be described as 'perceiving and co-creating from the kinaesthetic nuances, micro tonalities, and qualitative dynamics that emerge from movement, as we move, or dance in interaction with the world around us' (2018, p6). The following photo of Carina Santos expresses that. It was taken during one of my classes for the Dance Education Program when we were wondering in movement during a ballet sensorial co-creation class in a nature park in Brasilia. The image narrates our visit to the Olhos d'Agua park, where we found a wild region of lived experience. If you want, you can bring a somatic-contemplative gaze on what presents itself in this image, observing the nuances between shape, colour, background, etc. The photo illuminates and contains a state of presence, an eco-dance that emerges in the desire to touch, dance, and wonder about the world in movement. Will the image resonate in impulses, nuances, micro tonalities, or movements in you?

Figura 1 – Carina Santos, wondering in movement. Olhos d'Água Park, Brasilia. Picture: João Campello.

To dive deeper into the reflection about kinaesthetic approaches to the danced experience, I propose a dialogue between Sheets-Johnstone's concept of thinking in motion and Danis Bois's concept of sensible movement. For both movement researchers, kinaesthetic perception is our organic way of accessing a potent, pre-symbolic, and living world that is fundamentally connected with our experience of being in the world.

For Sheets-Johnstone, verbal language is post-kinetic: 'We come into the world moving; we are precisely not stillborn' (2018, p.9). By illuminating the indissociation between life and movement, Sheets-Johnstone also establishes the primacy of movement as a phenomenon that makes possible the multiple existences of being. Movement is how we come into the world; it participates in our existence, from the first duets between our chromosomes to the formation and maintenance of our bodies. This simple but robust finding is significant if we want to understand how we perceive ourselves and how we discover the world in movement.

In 2017, I asked professor Danis Bois, with whom I studied at the Universidade Moderna de Lisboa, between 2002 and 2005, for a definition of sensible movement. For him, sensible movement is life itself: 'life is movement, and movement is life'. In his view, to be alive is to have the capacity for change, adaptability, creativity, and transformation. The sensible, for him, is linked to a movement of life that emanates from the body, which naturally tends to its preservation, maintenance, and expansion. This internal movement animates the body, creating changes in body states and one's internal environment, and promoting the movement of our subjectivity and thoughts. For Bois (2001), the notion of sensible movement feels itself in the flesh, simultaneously becoming noticeable to the immediate consciousness of the person who experienced it.

Although Sheets-Johnstone and Bois often support their studies with scientific findings in various fields, they are primarily interested in the dynamics between movement, perception, and subjectivity within peoples lived and relational experiences. Hence, both of them needed to establish their research based on movement practices. Sheets-Johnstone has dance as her reflective field, while Bois founds his studies on somatic movement practices.

By observing dancers during dance improvisation, Sheets-Johnstone is dedicated to understanding what she calls *Thinking in Movement* (2011, p.420). In this practice, dancers do not follow a pre-established form, nor is it necessary to memorise anything. In it, the future is open; the dancer discovers dance by dancing and meeting the world's corporeality. Because movement is not externally pre-established, it is from a qualitative and kinaesthetic dynamic that movement possibilities are created and dissolved by the dancer. A practice that provides the dancer access to a place of not knowing and a place of choice: of the infinite possibilities that movement offers us at any moment, only one can come to be performed. In this way, Sheets-Johnstone sees improvisation in dance as creative and corporeal thought. It is not about knowing movement but knowing in movement.

It is around kinaesthetic subjectivity that Bois has been working for decades, studying the body, movement, perception, and, above all, the human experience to access the immanent subjectivity from movement. He describes his approach, 'We set out to seek the secret contained in body matter with the tool of perception, starting from a simple principle: only a sensible pathway can capture the sensible path' (Bois, 2001, p. 93, my translation). Bois's research focuses on the fact that this process is educable, therefore he has developed two post-graduation courses – Perceptive Pedagogy of the Movement and Somato-psychopedagogy – which I graduated from in 2002 and 2005, respectively. Improvisation is one of his practical approaches to movement.

But he also relies on coded movement practices to capture sensory and subjective information within the embodied experience. In this case, when there is the offer of a pre-set sequence of simple movements, the person need not create the form, releasing one's full attention to feel the kinaesthetic flow of movement. We can bring the image of neurologist J.P. Roll (2000) when he says that through kinaesthetic perception, we can consider that muscles have an inner vision and are both actors and spectators of the body. At this point, for the dancer, another dimension of composing and *wondering in movement* opens up, a kind of co-creation with our own movements: we feel them, we also sensorily observe them, and we can co-create with the subjectivity and images that comes from our sensations.

So, as proposed by Bois and Sheets-Johnstone, besides moving and sensing, there is a subjective quality engaged during the movement experience. In its sensorial dimension, movement can be informant, creator, and reflective, all simultaneously. Through these studies, we can acknowledge movement as a motor and sensory phenomenon (of organic nature) and a Sensible phenomenon (of subjective nature). Kinesthesis plays the role of promoting the composition between these two aspects of the movement.

For the dancer, this can happen either through a movement improvisation experience or a codified movement sequence. The body in motion, searching for new solutions, leads dancers to places. And what dancers eventually realise during these adventures is the process of wondering in movement, forming a circle of move–sense–wonder (or finding purpose, direction, nuances, impulses, thoughts, and insights), allowing them to better connect with themselves and their surroundings.

## 3. The role of kinaesthetic perception in dance teacher's education

> *Learning is movement*
>
> *from moment to moment.*
>
> Krishnamurti

As we saw, kinaesthetic perception is a physiological function that supports our organic and profound identity; as Roll argues, it gives us a 'feeling of incarnate self' (2000, p.4, my translation). Kinaesthetic dynamics during the movements and pauses of a living body are constantly flowing, encompassing conscious and unconscious states of mind. This essential characteristic of being omnipresent gives kinesthesia a

habit of going unnoticed. Perhaps that is why this sixth sense, despite being vital for our feeling of existence and our ability to interact with our surroundings, is almost absent in Brazil's textbooks and school curriculums.

To help me understand this invisibility, and as part of my master's studies, I applied a questionnaire during the five semesters I taught classical dance and elements of movement at IFB. The questionnaires were consistently offered at each course's beginning and end. From the first questionnaires, I could access that ninety six percent of students who started in my classes stated that they did not know what proprioception and kinesthesia were – their names, physiological, and somatic functions. That was almost all of them.

The word kinesthesia helps people to name something that they experience in their daily lives. Not knowing the term for the sensation of movement does not equate with them not embodying or feeling kinaesthetic perception. As we saw, this feeling is omnipresent and constantly available for us. But, when we name it and learn about its functions and how to attune to it consciously, kinesthesia gains another dimension of interest, awareness, and, most importantly, an expanded presence in our relationship with the world within and around us. By the end of the courses, all students knew what kinesthesia was, and most students shared that this 'new' proprioception channel opened up a new field of movement exploration for them.

In a way, kinesthesia, the faculty of perceiving movement, is for dance, the equivalent of hearing, the faculty of perceiving sounds, is for music. So, it must be at the core of dance pedagogical principles. My studies in Perceptive Pedagogy of Movement and Somato-psychopedagogy have been the basis for my dance work since 2001, when I started studying at the Modern University of Lisbon. One of the premises of these pedagogical approaches is that kinaesthetic perception is both a learning and a learnable skill. Movement is a matrix for sensorial pedagogy, therefore requiring a set of learning tools. One of them is to develop an attitude of 'attention able to perceptually capture the inner initiators of meaning that emerge from the original source of the movement' (Leão, 2003, p. 295).

Sensorial attention is one of the necessary internal instruments for accessing and observing new meaning, an insight, or a specific intelligibility of our kinaesthetic experiences. When applied during movements performed slowly and quietly, for example, it allows a better experience so that the nuances of the inner movement, fascia movements, and sensory movement may be perceived. Under these circumstances, we can, for example, propose an exercise to observe the raising of an arm and, meanwhile, follow how the sensation of the distal tip of the humerus (the end that is furthest from the torso) will move in the opposite direction of its proximal tip (the end closest to the torso). As one end of the humerus rises, the other end descends simultaneously. These ambiguous and simultaneous directionalities in the same bone and the same movement bring kinaesthetic challenges for the dancer. The dancing person, directing attention to one end or the other, and then to both simultaneously, will have different kinaesthetic experiences in varying angles as the arm moves. Therefore, a single movement engenders endless possibilities of sensory exploration for the dancer. Do you want to try it? Close your eyes and slowly raise your

arm from down to up above your head. You can repeat it three times and see if you find different sensations by directing your attention to just one end of the humerus and after to both.

Somatic practices such as this are interested in movement wisdom. The epistemological, artistic, somatic, and ontological path of wondering in movement resonates with Professor Ciane Fernades's statement, 'It is movement which brings new knowledge' (2016). Movement is the teacher, the partner, and the researcher. This path values the lived experience, taking into account its transformation processes.

The process of becoming a dance education artist is complex and unique; Van Manen brings up a fascinating insight: 'The thinking about the experience of teaching and the thinking on the experience of teaching seem to be differently structured' (Van Manen, 2008, p.7). Kinaesthetic pedagogy and practice give dance education students a kind of actionable wisdom: the knowledge captured while moving will make itself immediately available to them.

If it goes unnamed, kinesthesia remains in the realm of the invisible, unconscious, and almost unsensed experience. Its lack of recognition points to the importance of studies and dissemination strategies on kinaesthetic perception. I believe that dance education has an essential role in 'naming' kinesthesia and that kinesthesia is undoubtedly a tremendous contribution to dance education. In a way, this kinaesthetic field may allow people to learn more about the art of movement, experience embodied movement, feel, and even appreciate sensorial movement in their daily lives and dance.

Because kinesthesia reveals essential relationships between the body, the self, and the environment, it is necessary to investigate and value these relationships through dance, observing their relevance for dance and other environments. Those relationships are to do with our way of being in the world, our well-being, and our culture that goes beyond the personal sphere and enters our body-environment relationship. Merleau-Ponty (2004) states that 'man is in the world, and only in the world does he knows himself' (p.xii); kinaesthetic relationships expand and deepen embodied relationships between humans and non-humans, thus our experiences of beings of being in the world.

Thus, this article points out important aspects of dance and dance education that can contribute to our contemporary society. With this research, I hope that kinesthesia becomes more available as a primary source of pedagogical and compositional processes in dance. And that it will bring new awareness and discoveries by linking students' kinaesthetic information to sensorial and creative learning processes, among them: the teacher's inventiveness, self-knowledge, self-expression, motivation, sensorial co-creation, interactivity, diversity, and autonomy. As we become more attentive to the 6th sense, we increase sensitivity to the learning processes involved in this feeling of existence. Additionally, it may allow more people to explore their relationship with movement and the wisdom and creativity that comes with that exploration.

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## Biography

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# “Interhuman pedagogy”: Applying Ubuntu in teaching Ugandan Indigenous dances in cross-cultural settings

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## Abstract

This paper poses specific questions that invite teachers of Indigenous dances from African cultures to reflect on how to develop and apply pedagogy that can honor and value the epistemological and ontological philosophies in the communities where the dances come from. I draw on what I refer to as interhuman pedagogy, which I have developed from the philosophy of Ubuntu, to dissect autoethnographic reflections on how I developed and applied communal random mirroring, music as a pedagogic aid, and individualised and collectivised stories to teach dances in multicultural and cross-cultural settings. As the world becomes more paralysed by averseness to difference and decimated by dominance of Anglo-Saxon and Eurocentric pedagogic and scholarly canons, positioning pedagogies of Indigenous African dances and the philosophies that inform them can offer diverse practical and reflective ways of facilitating meaningful and honest connections between diverse people and communities in multicultural and cross-cultural contexts.

Keywords: Ubuntu, dance pedagogy, indigenous dances, Ugandan dances, interhuman pedagogy

## Introduction

The existing dominance of Western theories, pedagogies, and systems in mainstream education has sparked calls for urgent reforms that would embrace other diverse dance traditions, philosophies, and epistemologies and the benefits these shifts can offer to learners (Cruz Banks, 2007, 2012, 2021; Mabingo 2015, 2022; Mabingo, Ssemaganda, Sembatya, and Kibirige 2020; McCarthy-Brown, 2014). Integration of Indigenous dance philosophies and practices in dance education in cross-cultural and multicultural environments is a critical action still in its infant stages of implementation. For dance traditions from Indigenous African cultures and communities, the marginalization is riddled with colonial legacies, exoticization, institutionalised tokenism, and forms of Otherization.

In this chapter, I disentangle how I applied an interhuman pedagogy, anchored in the philosophy of Ubuntu, in the workshops that I conducted during the daCi/WDA

(Dance and the Child International and World Dance Alliance) conference held at the University of South Australia in Adelaide from July 08 – 13, 2018. In delivering content and pedagogy as Indigenous knowledge systems, I considered the dances as epistemological domains with evidence of distinguishing norms of creativity and practice that are anchored in conceptual bases, methodical processes, and philosophical and logical sets of creativity, content, production, and objective (Nzewi, 1999).

In preparing for the workshops, I reflexively considered questions that would guide the formulation of working plans and the organization of the activities. These questions included: 1) How can Indigenous dances from African communities be taught in ways that reflect the philosophical foundations that undergird the practices of the dances? 2) What dilemmas exist when these dances are re-contextualised in cross-cultural and multicultural settings such as studios? 3) How can a teacher of the Indigenous dance from African communities apply pedagogies in ways that transcend objectification of the Black body? 4) What conceptual aspects of dances as Indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated into the pedagogy of these dances in cross-cultural and multicultural environments? These questions became a point of reflection for me to glean pedagogic meanings after facilitating the workshops. The practice of questioning created a frame for me to see the dances beyond the movements enacted by the body. It elevated my curiosity to investigate the relationality and mutuality between the dances, pedagogy, experience, philosophy, and reflection.

The dance workshops attracted 40-50 diverse participants from different nationalities, ages, levels of dance experience, sex, ethnicities, and educational backgrounds. Each workshop lasted 60 minutes, with participants signing up voluntarily to participate in the dance activities. I drew on selected varied dances such as *Kitaguriro, Maggunju, Mwaga*, Kimandwa, and Runyege. The complex meanings, musicalities, histories, rhythms, artistic craft, and techniques of the dances provided conceptual, philosophical, and artistic foundations and accessibility to immerse participants in interhuman pedagogy.

The formulation of this chapter was reflexive, autobiographical, and reflective. As an Indigenous dance educator and scholar, I have been experiencing the transformation that has come with continuities and changes in my approach to pedagogies of Indigenous Ugandan dance traditions. I have taught Indigenous Ugandan dances in multicultural and cross-cultural environments in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Germany for the last 12 years. Every class, workshop, presentation, and creative process has been a ground for me to question the positionality of the dances and me in these environments. Hence, the questions mentioned earlier that I have listed in this section have been part of my continuous inquiry. I have framed my practice as a site for autoethnographic inquisition. My reflection and reflexivity on my practice, experience, and environments of teaching have yielded complex pedagogic meanings. These meanings have always been situated in and emerge from my pedagogy and the cultural underpinnings of the Indigenous communities in Uganda. The subjective ideas I have developed in this chapter reveal the pedagogic complexities of adapting Indigenous dance epistemologies in cross-cultural and

multicultural settings and the meanings I have constructed from immersion in the teaching processes.

This chapter presents a template of the workplan I used to facilitate the workshops. This workplan provides the foundational data set that I expand on to unpack interhuman pedagogy. A theorization of Ubuntu follows this as an organizing principle on which I grounded my workplan and actualised the workshops. In this theorization, I present how individuality, communality, and inclusion, as markers of Ubuntu philosophy, nourish interhumanism. Following this is a discussion on communal random mirroring, musicality as pedagogic aid, and individual and communal storying of the dance experiences as interhuman pedagogy in the dance workshops. I conclude by synthesizing the link between interhuman connections and Indigenous dances as epistemological systems, dissecting how we embodied this link in the dance workshops.

## Workplan of the workshop

### *Title of the workshop*

- Embodying interhuman connections through pedagogies of selected indigenous Ugandan dances

### *Duration of the workshop*

- 60 minutes

### *Material needed*

- Adequate space with wooden floor

### *Workshop participants*

- 40–50 individuals of diverse ages, nationality, social and academic backgrounds, and dance abilities

### *Introduction warm up – 15 minutes*

- Individual participants introduce themselves. Information includes name, nationality, dance specialty, the intentions for participating in the workshop, and the participants’ views about dances from African cultures.
- The workshop facilitator uses storytelling to explain the cultural backgrounds of the selected movements of *Kitaguriro* and *Maggunju* dances and the communities where they originate.
- As a warmup, the facilitator leads the participants into the *ekidibaga* game. The game covers body coordination, musicality, rhythms, embodied relationality, body percussion, and space awareness.

### *Exploring the dance material – 25 minutes*

- Sing songs for selected female and male movements using call and response.
- Translate the meanings of the songs and how they relate to the dances and the cultures of the people.
- Clap the rhythms of some essential drum accompaniment for the selected movements of the Maggunju dance.

- Learn the selected movements of Maggunju dance and their inherent techniques.
- Combine the songs, rhythms, and the selected female and male movements of Maggunju dances.
- Sing the songs for selected female and male Kitaguriro movements using call and response.
- Explain the meanings of the songs and how they relate to the dances, cultures, and the people from where they originate,
- Clap the rhythms of the drum accompaniment for the selected movements patterns of the Kitaguriro dance.
- Learn the selected movements of Kitaguriro and their underlying techniques.
- Combine the songs, rhythms, and selected female and male movements of the Kitaguriro dance.

### *Development of the material – 20 minutes*

Before and during the process of undertaking the following activities, the participants are encouraged to use the following questions as a point of reflection to nurture more embodied reflection, experiences, and understanding:

1. What does this experience mean to you?
2. How are your mind and body engaged in this process and experience?
3. How do the reflections and stories affect how you embody the dances?
4. How does this experience enable you to recognise, appreciate and connect with other participants?
5. How do you feel connected to other participants as you all participate in this experience?

- Participants repeatedly go through the songs, rhythms, and selected movements of Maggunju dance and their inherent techniques.
- While randomly interacting with one another, each participant performs the songs and selected movements of Maggunju dance and their inherent techniques.
- Participants repeatedly go through the songs, rhythms, and selected movements of the Kitaguriro dance and their inherent techniques.
- While randomly interacting with one another, each participant performs the songs and selected movements of the Kitaguriro dance and their inherent techniques.
- Participants are divided into groups of clappers, singers, and dancers.
- In different groups, participants jointly perform the selected songs, rhythms, and movements of Maggunju and Kitaguriro dances as one community.
- At random, the participants switch between the activities such as singing, clapping, and dancing which continue to run.

### *Conclusion and reflection – 5 minutes*

- Participants shared their stories on how the experience of embodying, exploring, and sharing the songs, stories, rhythms, and movements as individuals and communities cultivated a sense of interhuman connections.

## Individuality, community, and inclusion in interhuman pedagogy

In developing this workshop, I engaged the Ubuntu philosophy, expressed in the aphorism *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. *Motho ke motho ka batho* (Cilliers, 2008), and translated as 'I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am' (Mbiti, 1970, p. 141). I considered the strength of the philosophy in inspiring and activating people to draw on the humanness of others to inform their own (Bangura, 2005). I designed the activities to provoke the participants to explore and embody their individuality and cultivate a sense of community and the essence of inclusion. At the heart of the workshop workplan was the agency of individual participants in the dance experiences. Participating in the workshops as individuals at the center of the community would open multiple pathways to express and unleash their humanness with others in the same space.

The workshop workplan centered on individual strength, expression, and imagination as a basis for relational interrelationships. The activities project each participant as a self, possessing the status of being in relation to others (Okolo, 1992). Planning the activities of the workshops ensured that the "individual person within the community are not absorbed by communal or cultural apparatuses and have the capacity to express their own individual judgments, or to re-evaluate communal goals, values, and practices" (Gyekye, 1998, p. 327). Allowing individuals to blossom within the community framework would allow them to embody dancing as a lived experience with the potential to offer multiple entries into the practices and community (Anyanwu, 1987).

The sense and spirit of sharing were also factored into the workshop workplan. An individual was envisaged in a broader framework of the community. The premise of this formulation was that the community impacts the individual and vice versa (Forster, 2007). Encouraging sharing ensured that as participants partook in the dance activities, they would shift 'from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality vis-à-vis community to individuality a la community' (Louw, 2002, p. 15). The interplay between the participants as individuals and community, a guiding cornerstone in the workshops, was framed to invite the dancers to leverage the workshops as contextual, social, and cultural spaces to facilitate personal growth (Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992).

The rational basis for emphasizing reciprocal interaction between individual participants was founded on what Timothy Murithi (2006), the African justice, and reconciliation scholar, has stated 'I am because I belong, I participate, I learn, and I share' (p. 28). The workshop workplan was designed so that 'The Cartesian premise 'I think, therefore I am' was replaced by 'I participate, therefore I am'" (Marais, 1984, p. 264). The workshops were designed to nourish reflection so the participants could construct meanings and stories that transcend the body as an object. The dance activities were positioned as works of communal interchange, which would stimulate not just the act of dancing, but also build the competencies of the participants to describe, explain, or account for their experiences and what they mean to their world (Anyanwu, 1987; Gergen, 1985).

I challenged the workshop participants to develop the dance material and experiences further through questioning. Questioning stimulates curiosity and breeds critical thinking and reflection. It makes dancers see the dances and the Indigenous people that perform them beyond just the moving body. In African Indigenous knowledge systems, dancing acts as a thought process (Nzewi, 1999). It is a framework of thinking, doing, knowing, thinking, becoming, and connecting. Dance centers the mind, body, and soul within the community’s epistemological, cosmological, ontological, and axiological foundations (Mudimbe, 1988). It makes the world around and within us visible and intelligible. The approach of questioning was meant to invite the workshop participants to consider the dances as complex domains of knowledge, experiences, and meanings instead of exotic objects and fetishes from communities that are still underdeveloped.

## Applying interhuman pedagogy in Indigenous dance education

This section unpacks the key ideas that constituted what I refer to as ‘inter-human pedagogy’. The discussion enumerates how the workshop activities covered these concepts and the meanings I constructed as a pedagogue at the center of facilitating the workshops. The philosophy of Ubuntu and dances as part of Indigenous knowledge ecosystems act as anchors in which the analyses are grounded.

### *Communal random mirroring*

While exploring movement and music material for the dances, the workshop participants interacted with one another in a format that I have referred to as random communal mirroring (Mabingo, 2014). For example, the *ekidibaga* that we used as warm up situated the participants in the space of the dance activities. With play, rhythms, vocalization, interaction, and movement, the game ushered individuals into the workshops and the community. The element of play softened any emotional, physical, and social tensions that the participants may have held, stimulating their full immersion of the body, mind, and soul into the experience. The workshop format was not set for the participants to learn and explore the dances in lines and in front of dance mirrors that are common in dance studios. Circular and clustered structures were used as a framework for workshop participants to explore the dance material and immerse themselves in the activities. The circular formation created a sense of continuity and flow of energy between the different bodies of individuals. As participants rotated and turned in the circle, I encouraged them to experience a sense of connection with one another. The shared energy within the circle brought the dance participants to the same level of energy, goal, and involvement. The circle doubled as a ring of shared support, where the embodied interface was meant to connect the different workshop participants.

The clustered format of the workshop placed the participants at different points in the teaching and learning space. As they explored movements, they were encouraged to travel from one spot to another as they interacted with other participants. The interaction was random, relational, and embodied. The aspect of the individual agency was vital in guiding the participants on the choices they made in terms of the pathways they took, the individuals they chose to mirror, and the performative

elements they wanted to integrate from other individuals as mirrors. The element of interaction was further expanded into eye contact, physical relationships, touch, and facial expressions.

Communal random mirroring created intercorporealities. The embodied subjectivities of the workshop participants were translated into collective action. These relationships became the basis for interhuman connections. Each participant shared the diversity of other participants. The essence of communal random mirroring was not to have each person lose their individuality in the individualities of others. Instead, the logic was to allow each person to question, reflect on, and process their individualities and identities through other people’s embodied explorations. This relational interaction between individuality and communality honored that a person exists as a “free individual who affirms himself as such already has an obligation to complete, restore, or sustain the society within which this identity is possible” (Taylor, 1992, p. 49).

By applying communal random mirroring as a pedagogic tool, consideration was made of the African philosopher Alexis Kagame’s (1959) conceptualization of the body in Africa as the ‘shadow,’ by which individuals are rendered sentient beings, the seat of intelligence; and the heart, considered as the basis of will and emotion. Communal random mirroring underpinned the social, spiritual, cultural, and physical conceptions and representations that Alexis Kagame has alluded to. Communal random mirroring can occasion recognition of fellow human beings and non-human aspects within dance practice. In the absence of the physical dance mirror, other workshop participants’ active bodies, sounds, sweat, voices, and warmth became the mirror.

### *Music as a pedagogic aid*

The inseparability of music and dance is a standard characteristic of African cultural and artistic practices (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2015; Nketia, 1965). While developing and facilitating the workshop activities, I acknowledge the Indigenous worldview in African communities, dance, music, drama, forms of oratory, as well as the different kinds of visual displays such as masks, body paint, makeup, rock painting, and costume form a holistic Indigenous knowledge system (Nicholls, 1998). Consequently, I incorporated singing, body percussion, listening to drum rhythms, and mnemonics not as an accompaniment but as learning and teaching aids.

According to the dance scholar Ojeya Cruz Banks (2019), “The pedagogical role of live music, particularly in West African dance, should not be underestimated. Musicians are essential for assisting the development of movement–music interaction” (p. 7). The rationale behind applying music as a pedagogic tool was to advance the participants’ abilities to access and immerse themselves into the distinct movements, techniques, gestures, meanings, and contexts of the dances using their auditory and aural sensibilities. I used vocal songs to allow the workshop participants to engage their aural instincts and be able to engage the aspects of rhythm in physical bodily movements. Internally, using the voice, listening to the rhythms, and processing and translating this material in bodily movements create a dialogic and collaborative sense that builds from the individual into the community.

As part of the workshop activities, I explained the meanings of the songs and how they relate to the dances’ history, contexts, movements, and purposes. The meanings of the songs formed a theory that revealed the epistemology of the dances. Music enabled the workshop participants to explore the holistic knowledge and skills of the dances. Emphasis was put on the fact that learning Indigenous dances transcends mimicry of movements. The songs, body percussion, clapping, and mnemonics immersed the workshop participants in experiences as individuals and as a community.

The songs were deconstructed using call-and-response and listen-and-respond techniques. The call-and-response format connected different individuals into a community. These interconnections deepened connections and relationships, which solidified a sense of togetherness. The patterns of the songs were connected to the elements of the dances such as movements, gestures and movements techniques, and cultural functionalities. The songs were central to the interhuman pedagogy because they encompass scales, modes, and other details of tonal organization that the singers project as they dance. The voice and body are projected in the same shared space. The connection of the multiple voices and activated bodies coalesce into communality (Euba, 2001; Kaeppler, 1996; Nketia, 1965).

We extended the exploration of music as a pedagogic aid into body percussion, clapping, mnemonics, and movement. The workshop participants used different body parts, mnemonics, and clapping to play the drum rhythms of the dances. A combination of rhythms, singing, and movements became our gateway to the dance experiences. The music activities connected a learner’s “consciousness and the activity” (Nardi, 1996, cited in Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999, p. 64). It reframed learning as a process of reflection, exploration, inquiry, sharing, questioning, doing, and experience. The workshop participants experienced hands-on learning by creating a transformative relational system that linked them to what they were learning and how they were learning and acting on it.

While facilitating the learning of the dance movements, I used music to form communities of learners that supported each other. The different forms of music facilitated interpersonal activities through embodied and vocalised sharing and connecting (Nzewi, 2017). As some participants sang, others danced, whereas some participants clapped. I rotated the participants between these different roles. The pedagogic approach leveraged “listening closely, absorbing the music to understand it on a visceral level, and getting into “the groove” … [it] builds the dancers’ confidence through musical interaction” (Cruz Banks, 2019, p. 5)

Music was a gateway that the individual workshop participants used to navigate the kinaesthetic properties of the dance. Dance movements, gestures, and techniques were not taught independently of their attendant music and rhythms. Songs, body percussion, mnemonics, and clapping formed a foundation for the participants to explore the dances. Musical intelligence was closely linked to kinaesthetic proficiencies. Individuals explored the link between music and dance in embodied ways. The vocal projections and energy and their translation into body movements, warmth, and sweat coalesced the workshop participants into a community.

### *Indigenous dance as individualised and collectivised stories*

Do indigenous dances have inherent stories that are amplified through embodied expressions? Do teaching and learning Indigenous dances ignite experiences that can expand an individual's sense of expression, imagination, and connection? Can the stories provide a window into the deeper meanings of the dance? These questions were reflected on during the process of facilitating the workshop activities. Generally, in studios and other contexts, Indigenous dances from African communities are taught as just movements without any attempt to integrate the stories that inform and form the dances' techniques, movements, and gestures. This workshop took the view that meaningful pedagogy of Indigenous dances from African cultures should integrate the stories and cultural meanings of the dances. Furthermore, the workshop activities also considered that the pedagogy of Indigenous dances acts as a framework for individuals to construct experiences and stories by immersing themselves in the process.

As a part of the workshop activity, I explained to the participants the stories and meaning behind each dance movement, technique, or/and gesture. The intention was to engage the participants in understanding the cultural, social, political, and contextual source and significance of the dances. The stories and meanings revealed the link the dances have to the people, spiritualities, society, culture, and the places where the dances come from. In preparing for this workshop, I assumed that a pedagogy that allows learners to explore the cultural stories and meanings of Indigenous dances enables them to understand their theoretical sources and bases.

Taking on the storytelling approach, I took the participants through how the stories and meanings of the dances are linked to the dances and their attendant music. The stories were meant to transport the workshop participants to the environments where these dances are cultural practices and are celebrated. The participants learned that the dances are not just physical activities but are profound cultural idioms anchored in the lives of the people who practice them. We explored the notion that Indigenous dances as an aspect of "African thought makes no clear-cut distinction between subject and object, mind and body, self and world" (Anyanwu, 1987, p. 247). Stories and meanings of the dances enabled the workshop participants to learn the dance, learn about the dance, and learn through dance. The metaphysical existence of Indigenous dances is revealed and reflected in the stories and meanings. This is extended into the corporeal and rhythmic structures of the dances.

The ideas behind the stories were then extended into the practical activities of the workshop. Practical deconstruction of the music, movements, and techniques was approached as an extension of the stories and meanings. The activities I developed and the guidance I provided challenged participants to develop the connections between the movements and the stories of the dances. The bodies of the workshop participants became constellations where the stories, experiences, movements, and rhythms intersected. To begin with, the participants were encouraged to immerse themselves in this experience, reflect on it and use it to connect to others. I used the following questions to challenge the participants to think critically about the Indigenous dance knowledge: 1) What does this experience mean to you? 2) How

are your mind and body engaged in this process and experience? 3) How do the reflections, stories, and dances affect how you embody the dances? 4) How does this experience enable you to recognise, appreciate and connect with other participants? 5) How do you feel connected to other participants as you all participate in this experience? The questions sought to provoke the workshop participants to reflect-in-action and reflect-on-action. The essence of the stories and reflection was to show how Indigenous dances enable the dancer to engage the mind and body thoroughly and actively.

During the workshop, I asked the participants to share these stories and reflections by moving around and interacting with each other using communal random mirroring. This pedagogy aimed to enable the participants to share their interpretations of the stories, music, and dances. Through this process, the participants arrived at socially constructed experiences. The continuous interaction between the participants aimed to get the stories out of their bodies and minds and share them through embodied and practical forms. The collective energy that this interaction created culminated in collective and shared experiences.

## Indigenous dances and interhuman connections: A wrap up

The central focus of the workshop was to enable the participants to experience, embody, and explore Indigenous dances as platforms and spaces for interhuman connection. To arrive at this experience, I considered the workshop participants as "community-situated concrete human persons" (Myles, 2018, p. 251). This situatedness required them to explore knowing, thinking, doing, connecting, and becoming as an interactively and relationally guided experience.

Through music, movements, techniques, and gestures, the participants embodied and shared experiences, energies, knowledge, stories, and ideas through interpersonal, interactive, collaborative, and embodied undertakings. The underlying principle was to allow the flow of knowledge, experiences, imaginations, spiritualties, and energies between different individuals to morph into the community. Immense value was attached to the diversity of the workshop participants. I grounded the construction of meanings and cultivation of experiences in the unique discursive and subjective interactivity between the body, thought, knowledge, experiences, and energy (Nzewi, 2017).

The individual agency was the basis for interhuman connection. Agency made it possible for stories, experiences, and actions to be shared by and between participants. I intended for the workshop participants to synthesise their experiences and, at the same time, interweave them into an embodied and reflective world as individuals within a community. The Indigenous worldview of Ubuntu guided the workshops for participants to embody that through dance: people feel, discover, re-create, identify, and know the self and others (Senghor 1962). The physical actions of the workshop participants and the search for answers to the provocative questions I posed sought to invite them to be individuals and belong as a community. With an interhuman pedagogy, 'an individual develops an awareness of that community's

practice and thus comes to understand and engage with (or adapt and transform) various tools, language, role-definitions, and other explicit artifacts as well as various implicit relations, tacit conventions, and underlying assumptions and values' (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham & Clark, 2006, p. 645).

The aspects of process, agency, and participation formed the workshop activities' guiding thread. These activities were designed and applied so that the participants partake in them as a process of connecting and nourishing more experiences. The process positioned the participants as doers, thinkers, knowers, collaborators, and inquirers. The 'individual efforts [were] relational to social practice' (Billet, 1996, p. 4) of the dance activities. The participatory nature of the dance activities positioned the participants as social agents whose experience and connective power lie in the relational, interactive, inclusive, reflective, and connective aspirations (Nzewi, 2017; Salomon & Perkins, 1998).

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## Biography

**Alfdaniels Mabingo** was born and raised in his ancestral Village, Mbuukiro, on the shores of Lake Victoria in central Uganda. Mabingo is currently serving as a Visiting Professor of African Diasporic Movement Practices at Rutgers University. Mabingo holds a PhD in Dance Studies from the University of Auckland, Master of Arts in Dance Education from New York University (NYU) in the US, and Masters of Performing Arts and BA in Dance, both from Makerere University in Uganda. He has taught dance in academic and non-academic settings in the US, Uganda, Rwanda, Europe, New Zealand, Australia and Jamaica. He has published more than 20 peer-reviewed and internationally recognised journal articles and book chapters. A former Fulbright Scholar at NYU, Mabingo specialises in pedagogies of African dances, community dance, intercultural dance education, dance and postcolonialism, and decolonization of dance pedagogies. His latest book is titled *Ubuntu as Dance Pedagogy:*

*Individuality, Community, and Inclusion in Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Dances in Uganda*.

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# Teaching history and English through dance and dance through English and history

Dr Juliette O'Brien

## Abstract

The importance of arts integration in providing 21st Century skills in school curriculum has been widely acknowledged (MacBean, 2001), but limited in practice. This paper looks at an effective Arts Integration project in a High School curriculum in which dance, music, English and history were used in the delivery of a unit on "African American Culture from Slavery to the Present". This unit involved direct student engagement in relevant dance practice, alongside study of social contexts, purposes and meanings, changes across time and space, as well as evaluation of dance's expressive role in culture, its development and adaptation in cultural historical contexts, the impact of political history, and the implications of the apparent links between dance and social and cultural history and identity. The paper will look at the various approaches used in teaching this unit, the activities and outcomes, and student testimonies relating to these schemes of work.

It will reflect on undertakings of Ausdance (Australia) the Arts Development Council (UK) and Endowment for the Arts, National Dance Education Organisation (USA) and others, as well as the national curriculums or standards in each of these countries. The ideas presented in this paper could be used to develop further cross-curricular uses of dance in teaching units dealing with a multitude of cultures and could specifically relate to the Australian Curriculum's priority of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures', and its 'capability' of 'Intercultural Understanding'.

Keywords: education, arts integration, dance, humanities, cross-curricular

## Introduction

Arts education is vital in developing 21st century skills, and arguably every one of the World Economic Forum's "Competencies" and "Character Qualities" are developed through the arts (World Economic Forum, 2016) Furthermore, Arts Integration and cross curricular projects intrinsically teach both the interconnected nature of the world, and the skills transference. This paper provides an example of a high school project that integrated both subject matter and skills from drama, dance, music, language and literature, and history in the study of 'African American Voices'. It gives a

detailed explanation of simple and effective ways that dance, and music were used in teaching language arts and humanities and how this approach enriched the students' learning.

## Arts integration

The importance of the arts in general and dance specifically is generally acknowledged in both education research and curriculum development. In the USA. the National Dance Education Organization & National Endowment for the Arts published 'A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting' (2013) that cited scientific proof of the benefits of dance in education:

> Arianne MacBean (2001) demonstrates that authentic dance study can impact learning in and about written language and text, despite being an entirely different modality. As neuroscience begins to unpack the ways in which our brains and our bodies organise cognition from experiences, similar research studies can provide evidence of the ways in which embodied experiences not only clarify our understanding of the world of words, but actually foster the ways in which language evolves in each young learner. (p.15–16)

Furthermore, an ongoing encouragement of arts integration was highlighted in the USA Economic Rescue, Recovery, and Rebuilding on a New Foundation (2008), which suggested that while arts teaching and integration in school curriculums in practice were highly dependent upon proper time and funding, the result was more motivated and higher achieving children, both migrant and native, and over and under achieving students.

Similarly, Arts Council England states in multiple publications, including Cultural Education, a guide for Governors' (2016) and 'Dance Education, a guide for Governors and Trustees' (2015 & 2019):

> Studying cultural education subjects, such as art and design, dance, drama and music, sparks creativity across the curriculum, encouraging young people to be inquisitive, disciplined and determined. Wherever children start in life, a high-quality cultural education in every school should be a right, not a privilege. Alongside literacy and numeracy, another skill needed in our workforce today is creativity.

Cultural education subjects help young people to unlock their innate creativity, enabling them to become more rounded and confident human beings. (p2)

Consequently, in the Arts Council England's guide for Governors and Trustees Darren Henley OBE, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, encourages these entities to ask of their schools: 'Are cross-curricular approaches embraced with subjects across the school? Are pupils developing a cultural understanding and awareness through the rich and diverse genres of dance?' (2015), thereby effectively identifying the integration arts integration and dance as part of good governorship.

Likewise, Australian dance advocacy group, Ausdance, highlighted the importance of dance education for all, and successfully advocated for dance to become a standalone subject in the Australian curriculum. Their web-based article ‘Dance part of every young person’s education!’ (Ausdance, n.d.) states that ‘Participating in dance provides creative, healthy and stimulating experiences for young Australians’ and ‘Dance is a valued part of every person’s education, offering creative, healthy and stimulating experiences for all Australians throughout their lives’, uniquely highlighting the idea of nurturing a lifelong engagement with dance.

## Arts integration in context

Arts integration projects exist within wider school curriculum models. In order to understand where and how they can be part of school education; a brief examination of these models is useful. The Australian education system consists of ‘Learning areas’, of which the arts, including dance, is one. This model is designed to support individual subjects and cross-curricular approaches that ‘recognises the importance of disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding alongside general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities’. Furthermore, ‘The curriculum connections resources allow educators to draw connections across the dimensions of the Australian Curriculum on various conceptual themes’ (Australian Curriculum, n.d.) thus supporting the idea of interdisciplinary connections.

Within the UK. National Curriculum dance comes under Physical Education. The UK equivalent of Ausdance, One Dance UK advocates for, supports and funds dance in the UK school curriculum. Their 2017 ‘Delivering dance through the PE and Sport Premium funding’ states that ‘[Dance] combines physical literacy with imagination and creativity and is very useful element in devising cross-curricular work’ (One Dance UK., n.d.). However, while encouraging cross-curricular education in principle, this is not explicitly required for schools.

While the USA has no national curriculum, it has a set of Curriculum and Content Standards, which includes discrete National Core Arts Standards relating to the teaching and learning of all arts in schools. These standards are related specifically to dance through 11 Anchor Standards, the application of which to specific arts disciplines is defined at 4 educational levels. Pertaining to the integrated use of dance in the curriculum, the 11th standard is to ‘Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding’. (The National Curriculum in England Framework Document, n.d.). Thus, while arts integration is not a requirement explicitly, the Standards require the arts to relate to other areas of life.

However, in each case the ability to implement interdisciplinary and arts integration projects is dependent upon not only adequate funding and staffing, but upon teachers being given time and space for planning and execution.

## Project

The case study in this paper is from my own teaching, so all development and observation are based on firsthand experience. In my practice as a teacher, I have employed my dance experience in the teaching of English language and civilisations in two specific units: 'African American Culture from Slavery to the Present' and 'Indian Poetry and Performance'. I will elaborate on the first of these here as the unit was longer, more in depth, and more developed. In this case study I will outline the learning or content and skills pertaining to dance, drama, and music, and to literary and historical study. I will describe the specific activities engaged in and the outcomes.

The school in which this project was undertaken is part of the French education system, which sought and seeks to encourage project based and interdisciplinary learning through joint projects between various subjects as designed and created by individual schools. The small budget provided for all such projects was used here for an initial workshop with the cultural group 'African Drum and Dance Connection' (African Drumming and Dance Connection. n.d.) with everything else being created and delivered in-house. The leading teachers, myself and the head of music were also given half a day timetable for planning.

The African American Voices unit was conceived of as a joint project between the English and Music departments. The educational team consisted of two English teachers, one history teacher and one music teacher, and was spearheaded by myself as an English teacher and the music teacher. The delivery of the course took place over one trimester, and was shared between five hours of English teaching in regular classrooms, two hours of history/geography teaching in regular classrooms, one hour of music in the music room and one hour of drama in the drama studio, though it should be noted that not all class time every week was given to this project, as teachers also delivered core skills in reading, writing and other areas. This project was undertaken with a class of 23 mixed gender 14–15-year-old Grade 8 level students (*Troisieme/3eme* in the French system). Quotations throughout this paper were taken from a discussion during a reflection session after the culmination of the unit, and permission to use them anonymously was given by the school as well as the students.

## African American Voices – African American Culture from Slavery to the Present

The African American Voices unit was the product of a long discussion between subject coordinators, in which various ideas were proposed and discussed. The coordinators of the English and Music departments chose the subject area of 'African American Voices' based on the obvious intersection between language and music. The premises underlying the approach were:

- Song, music, and dance are often inextricably linked in African American Culture.
- Poetry comes from song, which is one with music and dance.
- Song, music, and dance are forms of expression, entertainment, life tools and worship.

The outcome aspired to use African American vocal and musical forms to convey an aspect of the African American experience.

Topics covered in the unit comprised:

1. Slavery: slave songs and narratives.
2. The Harlem Renaissance: context, literature, and music.
3. Civil Rights movement: events, speeches, and protest songs.
4. Contemporary racial issues and hip hop.

It was important to acknowledge with the students from the start that, while we can attempt to engage with elements of slavery and African American life, we can never claim to know or understand the African American experience, and that recognition of this is important in respecting other past and present cultures.

## Part 1: African roots and slavery

As an introduction to West African song, dance, and djembe, we were lucky enough to have the artists from a local group, 'African Drum and Dance Connection', work with our students. Through this, students gained experiential knowledge of some West African rhythms, body stance and movement style, specific dance steps, and songs, as well as an empirical understanding of the relationship between drum, dance, and song, such as call and response and rhythmic interaction. This dynamic and engaging introduction ignited students' energy and enthusiasm for the project. It also provided a memorable experience that permeated their later work as well as giving a broader life and cultural enrichment.

In preparation for trying to engage with the slave experience, students participated in activities based on specific dance-drama techniques, which were new areas of learning. To begin with, they tried to experience a range of energy levels and their associated mental states through embodiment. To do this students worked through Jacques LeCoq's 'Seven Levels of Tension' (Farmer, D. n.d.)

1. exhausted or catatonic
2. laid back
3. neutral or "economic"
4. alert or curious
5. suspense or reactive
6. passionate
7. tragic.

This was done first through the teacher reading out the description of each level, and students embodying it in the abstract, then using a simultaneous individual improvisation following a teacher led narrative on the familiar scenario of getting up in the morning and ending up late for an important exam.

Students also experimented with Antoine Artaud's use of breath. According to Artaud 'every mental movement, every feeling, every leap in human affectivity has an

appropriate breath' (in Roach, 1999, p.89). This means that every physical, mental, and psychological vibration affects our breath. As a collective warm-up we experimented with different types of breath and their effects: such as sharp, slow, deep, shallow inhalation and exhalation. We then breathed our way through the seven levels of tension noticing how the pace, depth, and placement of the breath changed.

These techniques were then applied to a specific movement task. Students were asked what types of work they thought African slaves carried out in America and were given the task of creating short sequences of 4-6 movements that could be repeated and performed in cannon, and that demonstrated this type of work. Following this, they were told that they could break from sequences at random points for an individual moment of fatigue. Finally, the class discussed what levels of tension were appropriate and considered general fatigue, necessary work effort, fear of punishment and other factors. LeCoq's tension levels and Artaud's breath were then applied to bring the appropriate energy and feeling to the different movements in their sequences. The results of this were movement phrases of stylised slave labour embodying, exhibiting and communicating realistic levels of weariness and exhaustion. What was striking was that once the LeCoq and Artaud techniques were added, the sequences took on a human empathy and performance level that was striking and effective.

As part of their English class, students listened to several slave songs and used literary analysis techniques to discuss the different rhythms used for songs of work, praise, and recreation; the common lexical and symbolic themes; and shared features such as call and response. To understand the rhythm and tempo, they were first played, then asked to sing 'Hoe Emma Hoe' (quoted below) from the folk tradition of Colonial Williamsburg, used in the 1960 film The Music of Williamsburg. The class discussed how the rhythm and structure would have helped slave work gangs use these kinds of call and response songs to regulate the pace of their work.

Verse 1:

> Caller: Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.
>
> Chorus: Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.
>
> Caller: Emma, you from the country.
>
> Chorus: Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.
>
> Caller: Emma help me to pull these weeds.
>
> Chorus: Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.
>
> Caller: Emma work harder than two grown men.
>
> Chorus: Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

Students also analysed the specific use of metaphor, noting how these songs also became an opportunity for slaves to talk about their masters, their overseers, and their condition through carefully coded lyrics using animal and biblical imagery:

Verse 2:

> Caller: Now see that possum he works hard.
>
> (Chorus as above)
>
> Caller: But he cain't work as hard a me.
>
> (Chorus)
>
> Caller: He sits a horse just as pretty as can be.
>
> (Chorus)
>
> Caller: He can ride on and leave me be.
>
> (Chorus)

Verse 3:

> Caller: Master he be a hard hard man.
>
> Chorus)
>
> Caller: Sell my people away from me.
>
> (Chorus)
>
> Caller: Lord send my people into Egypt land.
>
> (Chorus)
>
> Caller: Lord strike down Pharaoh and set them free.
>
> (Chorus)

As a creative writing task, students thought about what other problems slaves might encounter and were asked to create and perform a version of 'Hoe Emma Hoe' that addresses one of these issues. Students went on to listen to several other work songs from the *African American Cultural Narratives* web article 'Songs from Slavery' to find the common features. This work was then transferred to the drama studio, where they applied this knowledge by adapting their movement pieces, adding their own work song, and incorporating the musicality of the rhythm and the notion of call and response to create a performance that included creative writing, musicality, movement, drama, and historical knowledge.

After these experiential activities, students extended their knowledge of the slave repertoire to religious and recreational songs, through studying West African cultural history, including conducting background research into Yoruba Orishas and Orisha-Ifa. They learned about how worship of the gods involved singing, dancing, eating, and drinking, and that worship was also a form of recreation. Next, they looked at how this translated in the New World, where slaves blended their West African beliefs and gods with new Christian ones. After watching Cuban Orisha dances online and reflected on their African dance workshop, they observed similarities and differences in the movement. Finally, through practical dance, they explored embodiment of the

qualities of deities through movement, first recreating the gods seen on the video, and afterwards creating their own.

In their English class students analysed how songs of worship, expressing their belief in West African gods, the Christian God and heaven, were composed to give slaves the strength to go on. They analysed further examples from 'Songs from Slavery' (ibid.). In addition to this, students read and wrote slave narratives and created performances of these to enrich their understanding of the slave experience and engage in the respectful use of the colloquial in narrative writing.

In the studio the class discussed the contrast in energy between the work and recreational movement, as well as how slaves were able to find the energy to dance after an exhausting week, why they chose to do so, and the social and spiritual functions of the dance. Students were able to reach informed conclusions without guidance. In the post course reflection, one student commented on this:

'I got more of a feeling for what they were really talking about and dealing with because we were kind of trying to relive it ourselves.' (Female student, 14)

Employing the key notion of call and response, the students added to their work sequences the call of the African drum at the end of a day in the field, played by one student on a djembe or found object, and the response of the slaves with newfound energy. They also added recreational drumming and dance based on their West African and Yoruba dance observation and experience.

## Part 2: Harlem Renaissance

The second topic for this unit was the Harlem Renaissance, a period that extended from the end of World War I until the mid-1930s, and a golden age of African American culture, music, literature, performance, and art. The Harlem Renaissance was a burgeoning of African American racial pride: it laid the foundations for subsequent African American literary traditions and established African American popular culture. In history, the topics covered included the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Great Migration. Students also watched a short documentary on the Harlem Renaissance (History of Harlem Renaissance, n.d.) and researched a musician, dancer, writer, or artist of their choice. The key idea for this section was that African American culture developed as the product of several cross-sections between the arts and culture. In both music and English classes, the class spent a lot of time listening to blues and jazz and discussing the thematic, linguistic and structural components of these genres, and how they related to their slave song heritage and other forms, taking a comparative approach. Thus, there was a continued intersection of words, music and dance, with the addition of visual arts.

The idea was that the epicentre of the Harlem Renaissance was jazz culture. Through the study of the music of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong; the jazz poetry of Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen; the dance of Bill Bojangles Robinson and Josephine Baker; and the art of Aaron Douglas and Archibald John Motley depicting African American dance halls, students were able to identify African American

elements intersecting with European American forms. In music class, the study of jazz focused on the continuation of African American rhythmic emphasis, syncopation and polyrhythms, call and response and collective improvisation, alongside the developing use of European instrumentation, melodic line and harmonics. Students were encouraged to observe these elements in the movement, sounds and visuals of the other art forms they studied.

In the dance studio, we used online tutorials to learn some basic swing, lindy hop and Charleston steps, while others had previously studied tap. Students then experimented with dancing the African steps they had learnt in the initial workshop to swing music and vice versa. Through the embodiment process, they were able to observe the similarity in bodily alignment and how the syncopation and polyrhythms that had continued in the music were also explored in the movement. It also observed that the energy of swing dance and related this to its social and recreational function. All the discussion was done after dancing, and therefore observations were elicited from the students, rather than being taught. One student observed:

‘Normally you sit and read things first, but this time we just felt it and understood it, then it was just a matter of putting it into my own words.’ (Male student, aged 15)

The students also watched an early example of break dancing seen in Mills Brothers’ ‘Caravan’ in 1937 and created their own jazz-break dancing hybrids. They also looked at still images of dancers and dance halls seen in the dynamic paintings of Aaron Douglas and Archibald John Motley and used music and embodiment to recreate these images as tableaux, and then to animate them.

In English lessons the class analysed the literature of the Harlem Renaissance. The idea was to discover how the works of those writers who sought to find a new African American literary voice often included song elements such as call and response and syncopated rhythms. The focus here was on the poetry of Langston Hughes, who said ‘I tried to write poems like the songs they sang on Seventh Street’ (1940). This influence is apparent in much of his work and can be seen clearly in such poems as ‘The Weary Blues’, ‘Jazzonia, ‘Harlem Night Club’, and *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, a book-length suite of poems illustrating Harlem life. Countee Cullen also wrote about the joy of dance in his poem “She of the Dancing Feet Sings”. Students analysed the differences between Hughes’ free verse and Cullen’s more conventional poetic forms.

Langston Hughes, ‘Harlem Night Club’, 1926:

> What do you know
>
> About tomorrow
>
> Where all paths go?
>
> Jazz-boys, jazz-boys,–
>
> Play, plAY, PLAY!
>
> Tomorrow….is darkness.
>
> Joy today!

Countee Cullen, ‘She of the Dancing Feet’, 1925

> And what would I do in heaven pray,
> Me with my dancing feet?
> And limbs like apple boughs that sway
> When the gusty rain winds beat.

We spent time discussing how, historically, if a subculture has wanted to assert itself in the face of a strong hegemony, they have typically either sought to promote their own pre-existing forms as being equally valid, adapted the forms of the hegemonic culture, or to prove that they can recreate the forms of the hegemonic culture. As the school is based in Hong Kong and the music teacher is Hong Kong Chinese, so students learnt about the creation of Chinese orchestras from the 17th and 18th centuries. These initially used Western instruments and harmonics, but later reintroduced Chinese instrumentation to create symphonic music using a combination of Western and Chinese musical harmonics to promote Chinese musical education. In addition, I was also able to refer to my own research in the development of Indian Classical dances and their relationship to nationalism post-independence, in which the Ministry of Culture sought to find an artistic alternative to western ballet by placing former temple dances on the stage and developing technical training programs similar to those of classical ballet. Students had also read post-colonial literary works from India and Nigeria and were familiar with the adoption of western literary techniques by writers from these cultures. Students were able to compare these examples to Countee Cullen’s use of western poetic forms, versus Langston Hughes’ use of stylistic elements from African American oral traditions.

The task for this topic was to create a jazz music and dance performance of a Langston Hughes poem. Students were given a poem and asked first to set it to a drum beat that they created, then to employ movement elements and knowledge from the course so far and to create a dance to the poem. In watching the final performances, it was clearly apparent how the African American cultural aesthetic elements endured. However, these second performances in the unit had a greater energy and levity, as well as a more European sensibility, changes that the students could relate to the improved socio-historical circumstances and to the greater degree of social integration that were both features of African American life in 1920s Harlem. Furthermore, through this practical approach, students were able to engage with the poems in new and exciting ways that made understanding feel instinctive.

> ‘By the time I came to read the poems and songs I already understood the words and the rhythms’. (Male student, age 14)

> ‘By moving to the songs and poems, and working out a performance, we understood the meaning without it feeling like work’. (Male student, age 15)

> ‘While making up the performance we practiced it in detail, so we learnt the poem without thinking about it’. (Female student, age 15)

Thus, embodiment became a tool for both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of understanding, both of which they were able to apply creatively.

## Part 3: The Civil Rights Era

The cultural, artistic, and historical developments of the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and 60s took shape during the explosion of mass media, which was of fundamental importance as an element that influenced both historical events and cultural production. In history, the learning focused on the power of iconic images, such as those of the Little Rock Nine, Selma, and the March on Washington and how these images and media coverage shaped the Civil Rights Movement. Through music the students explored the continued use of characteristic African American musical forms and the evolution of jazz and blues, as well as their influence on other forms. In English students compared the lyrics of the protest songs of Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Sam Cooke, Mahalia Jackson and others to those of slave songs, as well as analysing the rhetorical devices and use of biblical references in the speeches of Martin Luther King, which also echoed and quoted slave songs. Students also read the play 'A Raisin in the Sun' by Lorraine Hansberry and looked at Hansberry's inclusion of blues music, Nigerian folk music and imagined dance ritual in the play, as well as discussing its staging of important cultural and psychological themes. This text was a stimulus for the writing of creative empathic pieces, which were later developed into mock-verbatim theatre performances that undoubtedly drew upon the other elements of this unit.

In the studio, students experimented with the embodiment of mass protest, using photographic primary sources and protest songs to create dance-drama pieces. Prior to this we ran a workshop that introduced new knowledge and skills in the theories of Rudolf Laban. We explored Laban's categorisation of human movement into 'The Eight Efforts': flick, wring, dab, punch, float, slash, glide, and press (The Black Box, n.d.). This began with exploring the four component parts: direction, which is either direct or indirect; weight, which is either heavy or light; speed, which is either quick or sustained; flow, which is either bound or free. This workshop was conducted independently of the topic, so as to present Laban's concepts as transferable knowledge.

This knowledge was then applied by exploring which efforts they can see in the images studied in history and hear in the music and vocals of certain protest songs, including Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' (1937), Nina Simone's 'Mississippi Goddam' (1964), and Sam Cooke's 'A Change is Gonna Come' (1964). Students tried performing the different effort-shapes as each song played and were able to find the best fit and use it to identify the emotive tone of the song so that once again understanding was reached through physical exploration and dance movement. Using the images, students first worked in groups to create tableaux of each image in a short time. They then chose one image tableau and, using the Laban efforts, remembering the Le Coq movement and Artaud breath, converted the image into stylised movement. Finally, they brought the historical image, music, and movement together by setting their

dance to one of the protest songs and reworking it, with the proviso that the piece had to pause briefly at some point in the tableau of the image.

Here the outcome not only continued to incorporate the elements of African American music, musicality and movement, but it adapted these to the poignancy of media imagery. Like the slavery work, the emotive and performance power was enhanced by new techniques so that the learning included knowledge or both historical context and forms of artistic expression, creativity, and skills.

## Part 4: Contemporary Racial Issues

For this unit in many ways the students brought much of the knowledge to the classroom, since they are familiar with elements of hip hop culture and had followed movements such as Black Lives Matter through the news and social media. They were already familiar with contemporary racial issues in the USA, hip hop music, dance and culture and graffiti art, and shared their knowledge, using it as a jumping off point for further independent research. However, while familiar with the material, students had not always engaged in thoughtful and detailed study of contemporary African American popular art forms. In music, students studied how the break beat of jazz and polyrhythmic complexity takes form in hip hop beats, as well as the continuation of structured improvisation. In English, students were surprised by the poetics of certain hip hop songs. One particularly fruitful and interesting poetic analysis was of 'Hip Hop"'by Mos Def (Bey, 1999), including his use of metaphor, awareness of art-form and historical reference:

> Speech is my hammer, bang the world into shape
>
> Now let it fall, (huh!)
>
> …
>
> I write a rhyme, sometimes won't finish for days
>
> Scrutinise my literature from the large to the miniature
>
> I mathematically add-minister
>
> …
>
> We went from picking cotton
>
> To chain gang line chopping, to Be-Bopping, to Hip-Hopping
>
> Blues people got the blue chip stock option
>
> …
>
> I'm getting big props, with this thing called hip hop. (1999)

Other hip hop songs that were studied included Pusha T's '40 Acres', which references the unfulfilled promise of 40 acres and a mule to every slave following emancipation, Kendrick Lamar's 'Vanity Slaves' on poverty caused by slavery to designer labels and image, and Nas's'N.I.*.*.E.R. (The Slave and the Master), which also explores contemporary financial enslavement. Students observed how these songs continued

traditions of using references to slavery, animal imagery, biblical imager as well as rhythmic emphasis and call and response.

Broadening the study to include dance, we focused on Childish Gambino's 'This is America', initially listening to the song, then watching the video and reading the lyrics. After this we watched a video which explained and explored the dance references and other images and references. Students were asked to consider in discussion how the music, lyrics, dance, and images combine to create meaning.

The creative outcome was the challenge of using their own knowledge of African American dance, musical, verbal, cultural and political history, and tradition to create their own contemporary hip hop videos. Outcomes were extremely varied in terms of what elements and techniques groups selected and how they used them, demonstrating the wide and diverse knowledge and skill set acquired, as well as the variety of personal engagement. Students were also asked to give a presentation in which they traced one theme, such as a structural element, quality, or idea through the history of African American expression and explain how and why it prevailed and was adapted in different contexts

## Summative statements

Through this unit of work students gained experiential knowledge of African American musical features and forms, dance features and forms, Laban, Le Coq and Artaud dance and drama theory and methods, African American literature, visual art, history and culture, and media studies. They engaged in musical, literary and poetic, dance, visual art and media analysis, creative writing, creative and critical responses and performance and formal presentation skills. What can also be seen here is how the threads of history, language and literature, music and dance were intrinsically interwoven and mutually supportive to create a holistic learning experience. They did all this is a way that reflects the interconnectivity of the real world. Moreover, they had a genuine ownership of both their learning and outcomes and a real enjoyment of the subject matter and tasks. When students came to show their work, those who had no prior dance experience performed with rhythmic precision, controlled muscular energy and precision of shape. Thus, not only were they able to develop an embodied understanding of the topic, the use of their bodies as expressive tools developed and improved. The colleagues both involved in the project and those with whom we shared the productions were all astounded by this sense of ownership, achievement and enjoyment from the students and the quality of the productions. However, the most telling feedback came from the students themselves:

'I've never enjoyed learning about history and poetry so much before! I'll definitely remember it.' (Female student, age 15)

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## Biography

Juliette O'Brien has a PhD in Global Perspectives on Dance from Hong Kong University, a Masters in Performance Studies from Manchester University, and a post graduate teaching degree from Portsmouth University. She has over 13 years experience teaching English, drama and dance in schools around the world in the International Baccalaureate, British National Curriculum, and French Baccalaureate systems. She recently published a paper in the Journal for Emerging Dance Scholarship. She currently teaches at an International School and is guest lecturing at Hong Kong University.

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# Investigating teacher's experiences implementing the Australian dance curriculum in a primary school

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## Abstract

Primary school teachers in Australia are expected to implement dance as part of the new Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016). Given that the curriculum has been recently published Australian teachers' experiences have not yet been explored in current arts education literature (Meiners, 2018). This paper reports on a research study of Australian teachers' views about their dance teaching experiences. Undertaken at an Australian primary school, the research investigated teachers' experiences as they planned, implemented, and reflected on teaching dance as part of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Using qualitative methodology, teachers participated in interviews within a case study. The research focused on key experiences teachers perceived as significant for their planning and implementation of the Australian Dance Curriculum (ADC) (ACARA, 2016). As an inside practitioner researcher, the researcher provided opportunities for teachers to expand upon their experiences. The paper provides insight into teachers' experiences of the implementation process and discusses recommendations that may assist in the ADC implementation process.

Keywords: Australian Dance Curriculum, dance education, curriculum implementation, teacher professional learning

## Introduction

This paper reports on a Master of Education research project that examined teachers' perspectives and pedagogies within their dance teaching practices. Drawing on theory from the field of dance education the study investigated approaches to dance teaching in primary schools through teachers' experiences of implementing the Australian Dance Curriculum [ADC] (ACARA, 2016). The paper begins by outlining the key concepts of the ADC and how these relate to the process of curriculum implementation, teacher confidence, pre-service teacher education and matters of a hierarchical curriculum. Next, the paper outlines methods used to collect data in the study that investigated the experiences of teachers implementing the ADC with students in an Australian primary school. Drawing on interview data from three teachers, the paper outlines their experiences working with the ADC

including attitudes and concerns about teaching dance as well as responses related to confidence, knowledge, skills, and professional learning. To conclude, the paper considers research findings from the study and literature to propose critical perspectives on approaches to teaching dance in primary schools in accordance with the ADC. A case will be made for a pedagogical shift toward teaching practices that offer a balance between learning technical skills as well as student-centered, creative processes that focus on making and responding that are inherent in the ADC, to be implemented in Australian classrooms for *all* young Australians.

## The Australian Dance Curriculum (ADC)

The first steps towards the ADC were built upon a commitment to develop an Australian national curriculum that was equally accessible to all young Australians regardless of cultural, linguistic and economic background as identified in *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008, p. 12). This policy document set out the agreed national purposes of schooling in order to achieve high-quality education and to address the complex pressures acting on Australian education moving into the twenty-first century. The goals emphasised equity and excellence as leading drivers in education, with an aspiration for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008, p. 12). Additionally, the Australia Council for the Arts and Ausdance Dance Plan 2012 positioned dance to become an integral part of every young person's education (Ausdance, 2012, p. 3). These policy objectives reflect global goals evidenced in the Seoul Agenda (United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2010), to ensure a high-quality arts education is accessible for all and contributes to resolving the social and cultural challenges faced in today's world. Designed as inclusive for all young Australians with wide-ranging body types, abilities, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds (Meiners and Garrett 2015), Dance in the Australian Curriculum uses the following rationale:

> Dance is expressive movement with purpose and form. Through dance, students represent, question, and celebrate human experience, using the body as the instrument and movement as the medium for personal, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical communication.
>
> Dance enables students to develop a movement vocabulary with which to explore and refine imaginative ways of moving individually and collaboratively. Students choreograph, rehearse, perform, and respond as they engage with dance practice and practitioners in their own and others' cultures and communities.
>
> Students use the elements of dance to explore choreography and performance and to practise choreographic, technical and expressive skills. They respond to their own and others' dances using physical and verbal communication.
>
> Active participation as dancers, choreographers and audiences promotes

> students' wellbeing and social inclusion. Learning in and through dance enhances students' knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and contexts and develops their personal, social and cultural identity. (ACARA, 2016).

This rationale and the structure of the ADC is reflective of dance education theory that situates students as choreographers, performers and critically reflective audiences, and teachers as reflexive collaborators in the co-construction of dance (Adshead, 1981; Smith-Autard, 2002). Dance in the Australian Curriculum begins with everyday movement, a socially inclusive approach that supports students to develop a movement vocabulary using their own body as a medium of communication and expression that is equally accessible to all young Australians.

The ADC outlines an aspiration for the implementation of dance in all Australian schools. However, when and how dance is taught is at the discretion of each Australian state and territory government (ACARA, 2016). Teacher professional learning opportunities to support the curriculum implementation process have been infrequent across Australia, therefore making teachers reliant upon an online digital document to interpret it (Snook, 2012). As such, teachers' abilities to interpret the online curriculum document will depend upon their personal meanings of dance (Buck, 2006).

## Teacher confidence

In Australia, common perceptions of dance by teachers demonstrate a lack of knowledge, confidence and skills to deliver the subject (Alter, 2009; Angus, 2007). Buck (2006) found that teachers' childhood experiences of dance shaped their pedagogical habits and their view of themselves as dance teachers. Furthermore, Snook (2012) reported that if dance was absent from a teacher's personal experience during their schooling, it is less likely that they will include dance in their classroom. She argues that interrelated concerns of poor confidence combined with a lack of professional development and resources, time pressures, and the hierarchical nature of subject areas are driving dance from primary classrooms.

## A crowded and hierarchical curriculum

In the hierarchy of curriculum subjects, dance has historically been less valued than other curriculum areas (Robinson, 2006). Currently few schools include sequential dance learning within their programs (Cone & Cone, 2007). The reported low status of dance in the hierarchy of curriculum subjects exists in contrast with the high status of conventional academic subjects that value verbal and mathematical reasoning (Robinson, 2016). In the current context, Australian schools operate under a neo liberal agenda that values education as key to economic growth (Angus, 2007). Despite a commitment to include dance in all young Australian's education, there remains a significant gap between the aspirations of the Australian Curriculum and the preparedness of teachers to implement it (Alter, 2009). Due to pressures on teachers to improve benchmark national standards in numeracy and literacy, English and mathematics command more than half of instructional time (Angus, 2007). As such,

the drive to improve standards in literacy and numeracy exerts enormous pressure on schools to allocate more time to English and mathematics (Angus, 2007). As a consequence it is likely that teachers may perceive dance as less of a priority than other curriculum areas and thus avoid its implementation (Alter, 2009).

## Pre-service teacher education

Supporting the goals of the Ausdance Dance Plan 2012 (Ausdance 2012) the Australian federal government highlighted the importance of pre-service and primary teacher education to support the successful implementation of the Australian Arts Curriculum (Garrett, 2009). Additionally, Ewing (2011) in her review of the arts in Australian education called on government and tertiary institutions to consider the initial preparation of teachers as an important opportunity to build teacher confidence to effectively embed the arts in their classrooms. However, evidence suggests insufficient time is allocated to The Arts in tertiary education programs to adequately prepare pre-service teachers to confidently and competently teach all areas of the curriculum, including dance (Renner, 2015). Additionally, teachers report a paucity of arts education experiences during their teacher education to sufficiently prepare them to teach The Arts effectively in the classroom (Alter, 2009). This evidence suggests that limited opportunities for dance teacher preparation may adversely impact teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach dance in primary schools (Bamford, 2006; Renner, 2015).

## The research

For this study, the researcher drew upon interview data collected from three teachers Kim, Mel and Sam (pseudonyms) who took part in a university research project examining teachers' experiences implementing the ADC in a primary school. Teachers worked together for an initial two-hour professional learning workshop where a range of ADC aligned resources and strategies were explored. Teachers then collaborated with the researcher to design a dance curriculum unit. The teachers implemented their codesigned unit and reflected on their experiences during a series of three lessons across the course of a school term. Data collected in the study included individual interviews conducted with the researcher prior to and after the implementation of the plans. Additionally, the researcher collected data that were meaningful to the project including classroom observations and collections of statements made by students. These data were drawn upon in the final interviews. The three teachers, who took part in the study were located at a school located in a rural environment with easy access to the city and suburbs. The population at the school included one hundred students and seven teachers. Kim, the school principal, and teacher with twenty-five years of teaching experience, Mel, with ten years of teaching experience and Sam, with one year of teaching experience.

In analysing the interview data, the researcher selected responses that highlight teachers' attitudes and concerns towards the implementation of the ADC as well as statements relating to teacher confidence, knowledge, skills, and professional learning. The questions guiding the inquiry were: 'What do teachers experience as

they plan to teach the Australian Dance Curriculum?', 'What do teachers experience as they implement the Australian Dance Curriculum with their students?', 'How do teachers' reflections on their experiences of teaching dance inform their professional learning?', 'How does the Australian Curriculum support teachers to plan and teach dance in their school?'. The following section highlights teachers' responses from three categories of their experiences working with the dance curriculum: first 'planning, then 'implementation' and finally 'professional learning and resources'.

## Planning

Early in the study Kim, Mel and Sam shared their personal meanings of dance and related stories from their childhoods that influenced their approaches to dance. Kim related his experience growing up in Papua New Guinea where, 'people just danced, you know, because that's what you know, people just learn to dance when you're a kid'. He later described an absence of dance when he returned to live in Australia. Mel and Sam shared memories of dance in school where they felt forced, uncomfortable, and worried. Sam commented, 'I remember thinking, Oh god! Who do I have to partner up with?' In these instances, early dance experiences may have impacted teachers' views of themselves as dance teachers. For example, Kim states, 'I think it's like many things we do where we don't have the expertise, where we avoid teaching it… we see (dance) as being something that dancers do, not normal people... [laughs] you know ordinary people do'. As such, to teach dance at the school, Kim, Mel, and Sam relied on funded incursions by professional dance companies. Kim and Mel reported they observed that students did not engage well in these dance programs:

> We've had professional companies that have come and done dance for us, and it's very much geared towards performance. And the kids haven't really… you know after a while they're just going "Ohhhhh urh" [complaining groan] a bit over it… and they (dance provider) come in and they do it for that ¾ hr and then they go off, there's only a few kids who get it.

Discourse like this collected during the first interview also included thoughts related to teacher confidence and preparedness to teach the new ADC. Sam commented:

> I would be confident in planning to teach it (dance). Would I be confident it would be the right thing? No! I don't mind approaching a new subject area. Do I think I would do dance itself justice? Possibly not.

Accordingly, Kim stated that he welcomed teachers' willingness to attempt to explore new areas of the curriculum such as dance as an important step towards effective teaching. All three teachers expressed a willingness to try new teaching practices to improve their professional opportunities. Kim stated, 'I think the fact they (teachers) are prepared to have a go..., gets them over 50% of the way in doing it'. As such, it appears that Kim, Mel, and Sam's risk-taking approaches to teaching gave them a confidence to explore new areas of the curriculum, such as dance, that may encourage them to work further with the ADC.

However, adopting new practices takes time, and Sam described feeling overwhelmed by time pressures and curriculum priorities of her job. She remarked, 'Things like NAPLAN and all that data to make things better through more maths and English streams, they become the priority and other things fizzle out a bit'. Her comments reveal time constraints as a significant barrier inhibiting the implementation of Dance beyond matters related to confidence or willingness:

> I know nothing (about dance), so I'd have to read the Australian Dance Curriculum, find resources, find music, film clips, find all that sort of stuff to teach it. It's not the teaching, it's the setting up of it, and finding time in my life and in our curriculum time to do it.

Mel compared the absence of professional learning opportunities in Dance with professional learning seminars led by curriculum advisors who have visited the school to support the implementation of other areas of the Curriculum such as Mathematics and English, stating, 'We haven't had any curriculum advisors come around and help us pull it (Dance Curriculum) apart and help us. We haven't had anyone come in and help us interpret it. It's only our own interpretation'.

This reported paucity of opportunity to access professional learning to support the implementation of the ADC substantiates the claims of marginalization of dance in contrast to the drive for improved learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in Australia. This has significance for Kim, Mel, and Sam who must rely on professional learning to interpret the online curriculum content and develop new practices to change any long-held beliefs. Sam expressed her concern:

> It's a reportable thing and we have to do it (Dance). But if we don't have those skills, and we haven't needed those skills up until now because it hasn't been a valid part, you know it's been an airy-fairy part (of the curriculum)… Then we need to be shown how to be doing all that, particularly if you're… you know, stuck in your ways or have your own stereotypes where you can't get past it.

## Implementation

Once Kim, Mel and Sam had implemented the co-designed dance units with their students they expressed that they were surprised by the approach to Dance as outlined the Australian Curriculum as it is a new approach for them and appears different to the teacher-led practices that typically dominate dance in Australian primary schools. Sam reflected, 'It's much different to what I anticipated. I thought it would be more like, well the dance we had before I suppose. That we'd have music, and we'd have to choreograph movements to the music'. This statement reenforces Sam's earlier comment regarding the need for professional learning to help teacher's breakdown stereotyped dance teaching practices.

In this study Kim, Mel, and Sam were positioned at the center of the research as collaborators in the co-construction of dance with an emphasis on students as dance makers, performers, and critically reflective audiences. Kim shared his reflections on

this approach, 'the thing I like the other day about what we did.… just reminded me, and this is very telling, that thing about being, me being creative in my interpretation of what using the boundaries you gave me and you be creative inside that and I think kids love that'.

Kim, Mel, and Sam reported that they realised that they did not have to be expert dancers to teach the ADC. Sam shared, 'I thought you had to be someone who watches Dance Academy and does Swan Lake or something like that, to be able to teach dance effectively. But it's actually not'. All three teachers expressed that they felt surprised that the ADC is something they could teach and that Dance can engage all students with wide-ranging abilities, experiences, and bodies. Sam said, 'You don't have to be good at it (dance) to teach it, but you have to be able to appreciate what others can do and see and give them the opportunities to do that'. In a similar way Kim shared his observations of inclusive dance practices to the broader aspirations of the ADC:

> I think the effect (of dance) on kids is emotional and neurological and just really valuable and changes the way they think about things. There are all the physical things about it, knowing where my body is in space, you know how I interact with others and how I move, how I can convey a meaning without having to say anything. I think there is a depth to that… they use that (dance) to play with the space and you can see the endorphins just coursing through their veins because they get so excited by it. I think it's a wonderful thing.

Additionally, as Kim, Mel, and Sam reflected on the value of student engagement in and through dance, they considered the potential of designing dance programs with connection to other curriculum areas.

> I can see how I can put that (Dance) into different things. Next year when I do HASS and English around English novels...I can now add a dance component to that. "Why don't you make up a dance movement showing the sorrow of people, of the Vietnamese refugees?" You could do it in that avenue, which I'd never thought of before.

Kim's, Mel's, and Sam's students shared that they enjoyed opportunities to act creatively, think flexibly and solve problems through active and collaborative approaches to dance as identified in the ADC offering for primary school dance. Mel reported that: 'They really loved it because I was asking them after each session, you know, what they enjoyed and then them coming out and going "Oh that was really fun!".

The teachers were surprised by the positive engagement of students regardless of gender and identified that through dance many students were demonstrating critical functioning skills that are valued by students themselves and important for meeting the challenges facing us in the 21st century. Mel shared, 'It's team building and relationship building as well as problem solving, you know strategizing or organizing. Important things for them'.

At the commencement of the study Sam had expressed concern about gender stereotypes and dance:

> You know it (Dance) still has a stigma attached that it's a relatively girl thing. Engaging particularly the boys, or some of the girls who will sort of roll their eyes thinking they can't do it. How to get over those barriers?

However, after experiencing of the ADC dance lessons Sam expressed, '(Now) I think everybody can be involved and you saw that in our class, like everyone was having a go'. This statement provides an example of the value of dance that engages students collaboratively and creatively and affirms personal identity. Additionally, Kim also drew on discourses relating to student engagement noting, 'They looked really engaged with it, which made me feel really pleased with our kids and their feelings about themselves as learners…They were able to really get into it'.

## Professional learning and resources

As discussed earlier, the lack of practical professional learning opportunities means the implementation of the ADC is dependent upon primary teachers' abilities to interpret the curriculum as an online document. This has implications for the success of the implementation process and the location of dance in primary schools. Mel stated, 'Seeing… for me it worked well seeing someone else do it (teach the ADC). Rather than reading stuff, a lesson plan or something but actually seeing it in action. It's an active thing isn't it?'. Teachers welcomed the new ADC as an important learning area with the potential to benefit students and themselves as teachers. However, the approach to dance in the ADC is new to teachers, so opportunities for professional learning will be important to support them to interpret the curriculum and develop new practices to transform long-held beliefs. Views about professional learning were additionally expressed regarding the importance of introducing new teaching practices and understandings to challenge enculturated stereotypes. Sam said, 'we need to be shown how to be doing all that, particularly if you're… you know stuck in your ways or have your own stereotypes where you can't get past it'. Further Sam reflected on her developing confidence in dance and her professional learning needs going forward:

> (I need) someone to hold my hand and pull me through. I think once you've done it once, maybe and are aware of the range of things that come under that heading, I think you can run with it. But I'm not even aware of that, so it would have to be someone there to guide me or push me or show me. I can't do it on my own.

Further, Sam reflected on her transformed beliefs about dance and her transformed views of herself as a dance teacher:

> Just that it (ADC) is brand new. And because of your own restrictions that you put on yourself. It's like 'Oh god, dance! I can't teach art because I'm a hopeless artist'. You know? So I'm slowly eroding those away. I really value it (dance) a lot more now.

## Conclusion

This paper has drawn on theoretical perspectives from the field of dance education to understand teachers' experiences working with the recently published ADC and looks towards new approaches to dance teaching in primary schools. The study provided teachers opportunities to examine their dance viewpoints and pedagogies in ways that involved dance making and responding within their classroom practices.

Drawing on data collected during a case study, the researcher aimed to reveal the experiences of three primary school teachers as they worked with the ADC with their students. The analysis of interview data revealed teachers' perspectives and approaches to implementing the ADC as well as the possibilities the ADC offers teachers to transform their dance teaching practices. A limitation of the study may be the small sample size of participants to validate findings.

From the beginning of the project, matters of confidence and knowledge were revealed in the discourse of teachers when they spoke about their early experiences of dance and the absences of dance in their lives including from their pre-service dance education, thus voicing their need for access to professional learning and resources. In working with the ADC in this study, teachers guided students to choreograph, perform, and appreciate dances. Rather than simply teaching dance sequences, teachers invited students to creatively respond to tasks and express ideas through movement, to work collaboratively, build relationships and appreciate the dance work of others. The teachers' reflections indicated that students enjoyed this approach to dance which differed from school dance programs previously offered at the school. The teachers themselves expressed that they enjoyed teaching dance in this way. As Kim, Mel and Sam reflected, working with the ADC engaged students in new ways and cultivated an enthusiasm to participate in subsequent dance lessons.

As Meiners and Garrett (2015) claim, critical perspectives on how to teach dance in primary schools are needed to provide a balance between learning technical skills for performance as well as student-centered, creative processes as outlined in the new ADC, to demonstrate an accordance between the curriculum text and its implementation. Working with the ADC in this study, Kim, Mel and Sam provided students opportunities to make and respond in and through dance using approaches that expanded beyond traditional teacher-led dance teaching practices. In this way they offered student-centered opportunities that became increasingly challenging and engaging for students. Correspondingly, a key outcome of student engagement was the enjoyment of dance that was expressed by both students and teachers.

These findings provide evidence that it is possible for the ADC to be implemented by primary teachers using dance pedagogies that are creative and balanced involving making and responding in and through dance where student engagement is enhanced by opportunities to create dance collaboratively. New approaches to school dance teaching require constructivist, student-centered pedagogies to intersect with the Australian Dance Curriculum as policy and with dance education theory. As asserted by Ewing (2011), pre-service teacher education is fertile ground for pedagogical transformation to occur across early childhood and primary education

programs and curriculum learning areas. Accordingly, in reconsidering teachers' approaches to dance in primary schools, potential exists to challenge teacher's deficit viewpoints of themselves as dance teachers as well as the dominance of traditional dance pedagogies, to transform dance teaching and meanings of dance for *all* Australians.

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## Biography

Kerrin Rowlands is a Lecturer in Arts Education at the University of South Australia. She has taught extensively in schools, universities, and arts education organisations. She works with government and education departments as a professional learning program coordinator in arts education and as a Teaching Artist in dance and Creative Body-based Learning (CBL). She is the program development manager for the Developing Effective Arts Learning (DEAL) program for Carclew (Department for Education). Kerrin's research focuses on the enactment of dance in the school curriculum and Creative and Body-based Learning pedagogies. Her current PhD research investigates how teachers work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the new Australian dance curriculum.

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# Embodiment as a pedagogy of peace

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## Abstract

Bodies and emotions are recognised as important in pedagogies of dance and movement but marginalised within education systems, which increasingly consider the body as distinct from and subservient to the mind (Medina & Perry, 2011; O'Loughlin, 2013). In this paper, we argue for a focus on the embodiment of peace in educational research and pedagogy, that is, a recognition of, and an engagement with, body and emotions. We explore personal somatic experiences to show how current discursive formations of education take little account of physical bodies and embodied ways of knowing. Drawing on post-feminist theory, we argue for a strengthened educational engagement with peace as integrally related to emotions, unknowing, pleasure and fantasy; and for children to be validated as living beings experiencing the world through bodily expression. Such engagements, we argue, are minimal in the current standards-driven policy environment with its singular focus on cognitive understandings and narrow formulations of knowledge ([Anonymous], 2014; [Anonymous], 2017).

## A beginning

As academics in early childhood education, we have argued elsewhere that education is increasingly becoming an instrument of conformity and passivity with a narrow outcomes-focus and standardised curriculum ([Anonymous], 2014; [Anonymous], 2017). We have suggested that the contemporary curriculum context does not allow room for embodied, somatic knowledge, which we see as pivotal to cultivate peace education to work toward a wider culture of peace. However, we do hold on to some hope – particularly in the micro-practices of teachers' work with very young children and in our own work and experiences in dance ([Anonymous]) and yoga ([Anonymous]). It is in these spaces that we have witnessed and experienced ways in which education can be a joyful, creative and embodied experience.

In this paper, we first explore some ideas around methodology, followed by a brief discussion of peace education, and then we each share a story of embodied, peaceful education: one through dance and the other through yoga. We conclude with some further thoughts on education toward a culture of peace.

## Duoethnography and post-feminist methodology

Methodologically eclectic, the paper began as a duoethnography between the authors. A relatively new research method, duoethnography is suited to gaining insights on culture, race, sexuality, pedagogy and identity where the researchers themselves are the site of research. Such research can be personally transformative as well as providing validation, insight and inform ideas and change in wider social and cultural spheres (Breault, 2016).

As a process, we engaged over many months in a series of conversations and theorizations developing on many stories from our histories and practices – listening attentively and attuned to each other's process gently peeling away layers and probing each other to develop a rich understanding. This paper draws on two of our stories to illuminate a common ground that emerged – while our experiences are different, there was a constant return to the theme of the increasing marginalization of the materiality of human beingness in education and the loss of self and soul.

Svi Shapiro's pedagogy of peace (outlined below); the feminist work of Nel Noddings – pedagogy of care; and the post-feminist work of Mara Sapon-Shevin, Bronwyn Davies and Elizabeth St Pierre theorise our stories. These feminist theorists provide an account of the relations between bodies and selves that extends outside the social and political sphere – beyond a dualistic picture of the relation between mind and brain. Instead, they often consider an embodied self, embedded within environment. Elizabeth St. Pierre (2003) remarks that: "I simply could not describe many things that happened to me if I thought of myself as a subject differentiated from space/time, the land, objects (p. 159) and Bronwyn Davies suggests that elements of unfathomable yet profound consciousness and fusion between the body and the imaginary space is a form "of embodiment in landscape" (Davies, 2000, p. 195), inherent in our stories. We write our recollections from this perspective to contemplate our personal somatic or embodied experiences within both educational and community contexts.

## Towards a pedagogy of peace

Svi Shapiro (2009) suggests that a responsibility for education today is to cultivate a culture of peace. "Our wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of everyone on our planet. …Educating for peace requires us to see the essential humanity of all people, and to fully recognise the way our lives have been conditioned and shaped" (p. 11). A pedagogy of peace enables a space where one's life can be shared with others while exposing our own vulnerabilities and prejudices – something that arises when emotions are stirred and experienced through the sensations of the body. As iterated by Shapiro (2009), education is a place "where reason, reflection, imagination … thoughtfulness and creativity can be stirred and nurtured" (p. 12). Dance and yoga, therefore, are ideal conduits through which peace – or an embodied pedagogy of peace – may be somatically felt as a transformative act. Hence, we (the authors) are particularly interested in the concept of an embodied or kinaesthetic approach to engaging in acts of peace as a somatic way of knowing that values life.

Mara Sapon-Shevin (2009) asks:

> What would it be like to teach from an embodied place, to bring our own bodies to our role as teachers, to be able to acknowledge our students' bodies in the learning process? What might be learned and what would be different? (p. 181).

The all too prevalent separation of 'mind' and 'body' perpetuates the belief that the mind (especially the rational part) is the only aspect worthy of educational attention, thus, leaving the body virtually outside the classroom, or teaching and learning space. Such a focus undermines and dishonours bodily experiences and the personal lives of students. The corollary is that education through schooling can be a form of dehumanization. The privileging of academic performance, as evidence of some kind of mental acuity, equates to learning which is devoid of affective ways of knowing, kinaesthetic intelligence, and the significance of social interaction. Concomitantly, excluding the body from education invalidates bodily approaches to learning. Subsequently, dance, yoga and other physicalised forms of pedagogy are viewed as superfluous to the educational process. An embodied understanding of peace envelops mind and body, feelings, and spirituality, and encapsulates an ethical and moral engagement with matters regarding the human condition. As saliently proposed by Mara Sapon-Shevin (2009):

> Every child who is touched lovingly, kindly, safely and respectfully carries that memory in her body. Every teacher who is allowed to teach from an embodied position brings that sensation to his future teaching as well. And every classroom in which children and teachers are allowed to be fully and completely human—embodied—allowed to cry, hug, dance, move, touch, connect, brings us closer to a world in which all humans are connected and peaceful as well. Let's keep moving our bodies in that direction. (p. 183)

While we are buoyed by these words from Mara Sapon-Shevin (2009), equally we find ourselves entangling with the paradox of peace — what this actually means and how it may be enacted within a somatic curriculum precisely because of the multiple ways the concept of peace may be interpreted. This paradox opens us up inevitably to a place of uncertainty — or the unknown — a place that can be messy, chaotic and awkward and yet ripe for contemplating, envisioning and/or imagining an embodied pedagogy of peace.

To this end, we are now going to share two personal stories to illustrate how and why a focus on peaceful bodies is so important in education.

## Adrienne's story

In recent years I have become a devotee of 5Rhythms Dance. 5Rhythms stirs your essential nature, stretches your intuition and imagination as surely as it stretches your body. It takes you to places that have been forgotten or buried and arouses your artistic sensibilities — it is akin to having a personal and intimate conversation with your embodied self (Roth, 1997). The free-form nature of 5Rhythms encourages the dancer

to enter these moments with full awareness, paying attention to the whole and yet also to the finer details.

During my participation in 5Rhythm classes I happened upon what I considered to be quite a profound experience. Lyn Fels (2010) talks about the unfolding moment and receiving the child in our midst, which, for me, is reminiscent of that moment of "wide-awakeness" that Greene (1988) refers to with regard to whom I encountered and was aware of: as a form of embodied consciousness of connection.

One Sunday morning I witnessed the most engaging relationship between a mother and her young baby. Being attuned to very young children, I watched in awe as the mother swathed the baby in a large piece of material that enveloped the baby's body, leaving only her head, arms and legs exposed. The fabric was wrapped around the mother's body with the baby positioned snugly against the mother's chest. The mother then began to dance in time with the various rhythms of the music, gently at first, and then more robustly as the rhythms increased in intensity, eventually reaching a climax and then culminating in a soothing, releasing finale.

While dancing among and with other dancers, my attention was constantly drawn to the close relationship between the baby and her mother. The movements of the mother's body seemed to provide the baby with multiple sensations from swaying deeply downward toward the floor through low pelvic movements to rising up and down and twirling around as the mother traversed across the room. The young child's face was alight with glee as she smiled at others swirling past her. Her small body engaged in the dance with waving arms and kicking legs that emerged out of the fabric cocoon, which embraced her and secured her to her mother's body.

The dance session progressed over two hours and participants became more and more immersed in their dance. The baby chose moments to sleep while nestled in her dancing mother's safe embrace. Toward the end of the class there was the hint of a murmur as the baby awoke and became alert again, while still cocooned within the safe confines of the fabric. When the dancing had ended and all the participants had gathered in a closing circle seated on the floor, the baby emerged from the swathe of fabric and began to freely explore her own surroundings initially doing so by lying on her stomach. She then used her hands and legs to propel her body forward until she too was part of the circle, manoeuvring towards others who were sitting in the circle.

She finally paused at the foot of another adult while she investigated the person's toes and comfortably melted into this other person's crossed legs. She appeared to know where she was and who she was with. Her expressive face and eyes made contact with others and she smiled as each of us gave thanks for this time to share and dance together.

This event taught me the beauty of including our very youngest in the things we do. The mother and child bond creates a mutuality of trust grounded in pleasurable and embodied sensations. The aesthetic experiencing of rhythmic patterns associated with the close proximity of the mother's body may have provided the baby with an ontological and emotional understanding of elements such as fast and slow tempos,

planes and levels, diagonals and directions, and soft and strong energies or vibrations (Dissanayake, 2002). The mother's embodied experience acts as a connector between the dancing and the child. This is a relationship of trust and reciprocation – a partnership between two human beings experiencing something that is very intimate; a dance full of meaning and love, imbued with the essence of peacefulness. Witnessing such an experience is truly a treasure to behold and a wonderful introduction to dance for our very youngest.

## Sandy's story

I have practiced yoga for more than half my life: For many years, I was convinced of the value of hot yoga, flow, and any yoga that had the word 'power' in the title. However, I have recently discovered a new form of power yoga called restorative yoga. It has meant spending a great deal of time rolling on the ground in child-like play and connecting for hours on end with the floor. As an early childhood teacher, it doesn't take much to convince me of the value of this kind of play, and moreover, the value of doing absolutely nothing at all.

In restorative yoga (ideally, in all yoga) there is an opportunity to embody peace through *Ahimsa*, a key virtue in Indian religions, involving respect for all living things and avoidance of violence towards others – lovingkindness, if you like. The aim of restorative yoga is to induce rest and ease – to be kind to oneself. It is a form of yoga where every limb and joint is beautifully supported with cushions, bolsters and blankets so that the body receives a message of serene peacefulness. The teacher's role is to hold a safe, supportive space for each student. With its emphasis on deliberately slowing down and finding optimal comfort, the practice of restorative yoga activates the *parasympathetic nervous system*, the neural pathway responsible for resting and digesting, restoring easy breathing, lowering blood pressure and heart rates, relaxing tension, and bringing greater balance.

I want to share with you some reflections on the profound peacefulness that I have experienced: It's my first night as teaching assistant of a restorative yoga class and I'm very nervous. I'm really not sure what I am supposed to do – on one hand I am relaxed that there is not a lot to do; on the other hand, I'm worried there is so little to do; how am I going to cope? Creating the space is important – and the teacher has that covered – the room is an oasis of calm: the lights are dim, the room warm and the adults are wandering in collecting their bolsters and blankets. Our teacher sets the scene and suggests to 'the regulars' to either take up their own practice or to engage with a particular shape that she then proceeds to share with the newer members. I'm focused on ensuring the maximum comfort for the students – particularly the new ones who may be feeling a bit 'feet off the ground' (in all senses).

Over the course of an hour and a quarter – silence – gently punctuated with soft words or music, and every 20 minutes or so, an invitation to change into another shape. The teacher attends consciously to languaging the class, orientating participants to relax and soften various parts of the body (organs, bones, muscles), mind and breath. Then it's eerily quiet and still – and I watch an intensity of rest all around me. But I start to

wonder … “why would someone pay to go to sleep in a room full of strangers?” And sleep some do. For one or two, it is the only place they can find the solace to sleep. While we encourage awakeness in the class, we also see on the faces of some, the desperate need to sleep.The bodies that leave the room that evening look profoundly different to the ones that entered: skins are smoother, limbs looser, voices gentler.

One of the principles of restorative yoga is yielding. In restorative yoga we yield to the force of gravity and are encouraged to intensify the yielding through being aware of the body. My experience and my observations of others’ practice suggest that people experience a profound sense of relief, ease and letting go and sense of breathing becoming freer. In restorative yoga, we create smooth transitions in the flow of our body, establishing gentle undulations with our bodies that encourage energy flow through relaxation. This is a key point for many of us who love moving our bodies – who love the sensations of movement – stretching and strengthening ourselves.

High sensation is perhaps necessary to connect into the body and delight in the experience of it all. It is also part of the fight/flight response – and an important response mechanism for survival. However, living in a state of constant stress, fight/flight is also counterintuitive to moving fully and mindfully. Another way to inhabit our body is to attempt to connect to the serenity of stillness and peace.

## Summary comments

What do these stories tell us about an embodiment of peace in education?

At one level, they provide quite different perspectives on movement. [Anonymous] 1’s story is one of dance, which evokes high sensation, epic journeying from genesis through chaos to calm. Her story reveals love, encounter and relationality. [Anonymous] 2’s story evokes an intensity of interiority, a relationship with selves and materials and breath. We suggest that our stories are similar, though, in that they connect us to our humanness, and help us to cherish the alterity of others. As Noddings (2002) observes, humanity, emotion and compassion require a level of sensitivity, a form of bodily or embodied understanding, something that often comes from deep within.

A caring person is a person who is open to engage in a caring encounter – we care and are, therefore, cared for … a level of sensitivity, a form of bodily or embodied understanding, something that often comes from deep within (Noddings, 2002). The way we feel bodily might provoke a sense of empathy and receptivity, leading to peace in the world. As proffered by Sapon-Shevin, (2009):

> What if we connected what we know and feel about our own bodies and the bodies of those we love with all the other bodies in the world, knowing that nations being bombed far away were populated by real people with real bodies, a lot like ours? (pp. 182–183)

Caring about others and the world can help to develop a heightened understanding of the environment as well as agency to care unconditionally for all things (Noddings,

2003). Such a "culture of caring" (Bond, 2000) must surely contribute to quality of life for humans and other species in the world we share. As bodily practices, dance and yoga can be a form of respect and veneration that help to establish reciprocal and possibly empathetic relationships and by association, peaceful encounters with others and with the world in which we live. To reconnect with Sapon-Shevin (2009), we suggest that every child touched lovingly and respectfully and every teacher who is allowed to teach from an embodied position brings us closer to a world of human connectivity and peace. In a somatic curriculum – a curriculum that emphasises internal physical perception and experience – the body engages both with the fleshy, material nature of our beings and the ways these are interpreted and shaped in our social worlds.

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## Biographies

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