

Promoting children's engagement in dance: A qualitative pedagogy study

by

Kun Liu
B.A., Beijing Sport University, 2011

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

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to explore teaching approaches used by a middle school dance teacher who promotes children's engagement in dance and enhances their enjoyment of dancing. The study uses both ethnography and autoethnography research approaches. The goals of the research were; (a) to explore the connection between the dance teacher's and my own joy of doing and learning dance from our personal narratives that chart our life trajectories into becoming dance teachers, and (b) to explore how a middle school dance teacher in a Canadian Middle School teaches dance as she tries to enable all the children in her classes to enjoy and want to engage in dance. The focus research question in this study was "How do dance teachers engage children and enable all children in school to enjoy dance?" This research drew on flow, process and happiness theories. As the researcher I observed two dance classes (grade 6 and 8), over a twelve week period, noting the teacher's and her students' behaviors. In addition, I interviewed (1) the dance teacher prior and after the dance classes, and (2) two students from each class in relation to observed classes. The findings from the ethnography offered emerging themes on how to engage students in dance, that included, (1) purposeful pedagogy, (2) creating trust, (3) within and between groups for each other, (4) encouraging quality movements, and (5) addressing shy, nervous and resistant students. The autoethnography insights allowed themes to emerge from the teacher's personal background, in particular in relation to her joy in performing dance at festivals and in her desire to encourage her own children (three young boys) to engage in dance. The key findings from interviewing the students was that they felt involved by creating their own dance, enjoyed working in groups which were mixed gender but where they could choose which group to be in, and where able to create a dance festival performance. Selecting a dance style, music and costume, all motivated the students for the final performance.

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Dedication

To my mom and dad!

Chapter 1: Introduction

It is widely accepted that dance as a form of art plays an important role in our lives (Murcia, Kreutz, Clift & Bongard, 2010, p. 161). Dance is not only associated with numerous psychological health benefits, but it contributes to children's physical health. More specifically, dance is an effective tool for children to express their feelings and decrease stress. According to Murcia, Kreutz, Clift, and Bongard (2010), dance can provide an enjoyable experience to enhance social, physical and emotional wellbeing (p. 149). In addition, dance has many positive benefits for children's physical health. As Leopold (2004) noted, "Dance provides an amazing workout. It tones muscles, trims the torso, builds bones, and strengthens the heart" (p. 16).

Unfortunately, it appears that few students are interested in dance courses due to social pressure and attitudes. More specifically, Risner (2014) did research in order to figure out what social supports provide meaningful encouragement. In this research he found that "a third of male dancers were dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied with the support their dancing receives" which including family, peers, school and social supports (p. 194). Peer support is another important point for male dancers; however, male dancers are more likely suffering from bullying. Risner (2014) illustrated that "male adolescent dancers (85%) are at least seven times more likely than the general adolescent population to be bullied (9–12%)" (p. 194).

Another negative factor is that, according to Bonbright (1999), dance education in many schools is impoverished or non-existent (p. 35). In US, about 57% of elementary students and 80% of eighth-grade students do not receive dance education.

Approximately 20% of middle school students receive dance; only 3% receive dance

courses three or four times per week; 4% of students receive dance classes just one or two times per week; and 13% students receive fewer than one dance class per week (p. 35).

This situation is similar in both Canada and China with fewer students having a chance to participate in dance education. Gilbert (2005) indicated that “dance in this country [Canada] is driven by the commercial studio industry and competition when we are talking about dance and children” (p. 31). In addition, “ninety-five percent of children are not given creation/composition classes until they enter into a college or university program” (p. 31).

Gender is another major issue in dance education. As Risner (2007) indicated, “Dance education and training have long been associated with gender and gender roles in world culture” (p. 140). There are many misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards male dancers. Male dancers are often considered to be gay or bisexual if they are involved in Western theatrical dance and it’s training (p. 139). Furthermore, in some countries, dance is more suited to girls than boys. As Sanderson (2001) showed, in Europe, “Dance education is considered appropriate only for female adolescents” (p. 117). Therefore, many boys feel disappointed in the type of dance experiences provided by schools. As noted by Sanderson (2001) some males reluctantly choose dance as an examination subject in the UK (p. 121).

Sanderson (2001) interviewed 1668 pupils (735 boys, 933 girls) between the ages of 11 and 16 in middle schools in England. The findings indicated some common beliefs about male dancers.

1. If you saw a man dancing to really soft music it would look stupid
2. Male dancers should do movement that is very difficult.

3. Men shouldn't move to gentle music, it's not the right image
4. Boys shouldn't do ballet or modern dance
5. Male dancers look silly wearing tights
6. Ballet dancing is for women
7. I don't like to see boys doing expressive movement (p. 125).

Furthermore, the lack of professional teachers, supportive environments, sound curriculum and training times also appeared to contribute to children's lack of motivation for, and enrolment in, dance education. Some traditional dance pedagogies focus on teaching skills and movements rather than developing creative ability in dance. There are four steps of learning: information, meaning, creation, and action. Those steps connect with dance education concepts such as knowing, perceiving, creating and responding (Gilbert, 2005, p. 34). There is a type of dance pedagogy that tends to happen with the lack of balance in educational system, "in which the first half of the learning cycle, receiving knowledge, is emphasized over the second half of the cycle, using knowledge". Dance teachers should not only teach students' routines, skills or lecture of dance history, but also ask students to improvise, discuss and choreograph dance by themselves (Gilbert, 2005, p. 34).

Those challenges are directly associated with the quality of dance education. As a result, it is important to understand (a) what dance pedagogy is, and (b) what pedagogy dance teachers can use to improve children's enjoyment of dance.

Dance pedagogy is a type of training that develops self-expression and interpretation through time, space and energy (Koff, 2000, pp. 27-28). It includes the strategies used by teachers to introduce dance to children in the classroom. Instead of

training children as performers, dance education for young children should allow them to express themselves through motion, with self-knowledge (Koff, 2000, pp. 27-28). Being sensitive to students' emotions and facilitating their self-expression in dance class also plays a significant role in dance pedagogy. Gilbert (2005) believed that,

in the past, dance teachers in private studios have often used fear and criticism as a way to “inspire” students. While a few dancers may accept abusive behavior from their dance teachers as the norm, the majority of students eventually drop out of class because they do not feel safe or happy. I have encountered numerous adults who recount stories of traumatic dance experiences (p. 34).

Therefore, dance educators should find a method to solve this issue, which requires people to understand the value of emotions and the important role emotions play in students' learning process. Moreover, it is significant to understand how to intrinsically and extrinsically reward students. As Gilbert (2005) said “humans may first be lured to a subject through an extrinsic reward such as a trophy. But ultimately, intrinsic rewards such as receiving positive and immediate feedback, being in control of one's learning, and feeling passionate about a subject are what create a lifelong desire to learn” (p. 34).

In addition, dance teaching should not only include technique classes or ethnicity and culture in dance, but also involve “dance history, aesthetics, and criticism; improvisation and choreography; or Jazzercise, cheerleading, line dancing, and drill team” (Bonbright, 1999, p. 36). It is important to use the creative process and engage children to “think and reason, to find and solve problems, and to use higher-order thinking skills across the curriculum in interdisciplinary education” (p. 36).

Story: interest and passion in dance.

This next section will frame my interest in researching dance. The following anecdote was created as part of a qualitative research methods course and is extracted from my final assignment (Kun Liu, ref, 2013). In addition, I shared my interest and passion in dance with the research participant in order to make a close connection with her. It also helps readers gain a sense of the joy of performing and teaching dance that the research participant shared. The following is my passion story.

I first started to dance when I was 9. Once I had started dance study, I found I had a real passion for it. For example, one day, it was extremely windy and pouring rain. My parents suggested that I should not go to dance school, but I did not want to miss the class. I took an umbrella to set off for the dance studio by myself; it was too wet for my parents. On the road, I could see lightning in the sky. The rain blew onto my face and I felt I could not breathe. When I recall that day, it is still the worst walk of my life; I was soaked, wind swept and chilled. When I got to the dance studio, it was very quiet, still and empty, nobody else had dared the treacherous conditions. I walked along the hallway; I felt I could hear a pin drop. I wondered if my instructor would be there.

I opened the door to the dancing class. No one was in the classroom except my dancing teacher, sitting on a chair. She was amazed to see me; her face beamed as she welcomed me into the room. Consequently, on that day, my dancing teacher and I had a one to one dancing lesson. I had expected to learn on that day but I never dreamed how much I was going to learn through focused practice. Before that day I lacked confidence in my dance ability.

We started on the floor and then at the bar with music. She corrected my actions and demonstrated correct technique. Then we moved in to the studio— using the whole space, we developed a routine. Generally, our class had 20-30 students. Ordinarily she did not have much time to correct my movements; however, on that day, she attempted to correct my every imperfection, it was an amazing to feel the moves come together, I felt a sense of connectedness and flow. In the course of that session I improved my dancing and learned the movements more precisely. At the end of class, she told me, “Interest and passion are the best teachers.” She hoped I would keep on working hard with such passion. That was the day I decided to become a dancer.

What is the sense of flow in dance?

As captured in the previous story, as a dancer I realized a sense of flow as my instructor guided my movements. Flow is intrinsic motivation and a transcendent state between boredom and anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p.46). It is the mental process that helps people to feel energized and focused, fully involved and enjoying what they do.

Flow is an important theory in dance pedagogy. As Bond and Stinson (2000) indicate, “A number of elements that usually characterize flow experiences were present in young people's descriptions of dance, including merger of action and awareness, exclusion of distractions from one's consciousness, disappearance of self-consciousness, an altered sense of time, and autotelicity” (p.73). Csikszentmihalyi (1991) stated that flow happens in situations that involve challenge, but not so much challenge as to produce anxiety. Individuals need to control their environment and actions in order to experience flow (p. 46). As a result, flow in dance may occur when dance teachers teach

some skills with challenge, but not too much challenge so that students can acquire those skills from working hard and trying. This situation can enhance learning motivation and interest. After they achieve the skills, they will experience achievement and confidence that can influence their future study and make a virtuous circle in the learning process.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Joseph and Wu (2009) and Criss (2011) use flow, happiness, and process theories to examine motivation in dance education. Flow is an intrinsic motivation and a transcendent state that exists between boredom and anxiety. It is also the mental process where people feel an energized focus, full involvement and a sense of joy in what they do (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 305). Happiness maximizes the feelings of pleasure by regularly experiencing pleasantness, having a high level of engagement in satisfying activities, and a sense of connectedness to a greater whole (Joseph & Wu, 2009, p. 175).

“Process theories focus on the cognitive processes that influence behaviour. It contends that motivation lies in the intrinsic desire to improve personally, to solve problems, and to gain understanding” (Criss, 2011, p. 63). More specifically, the motivation in process theories is a mental process that “people value self-respect and self-satisfaction more highly than they value material rewards” (Criss, 2011, p. 63). As a result, people achieve self-satisfaction in dance that is more valuable than a tangible prize.

Dance, if taught effectively, creates the ideal situation for learners to experience flow as advocated by process theories. The effective teaching of dance would enable “instructors who are skilled at motivating their students to make learning personally relevant to the children and to persuade them that their expectations for success should be high. Their students feel motivated if classroom activities encourage their feelings of

autonomy and self-direction, and they feel respected and trusted” (Criss, 2011 p. 63).

Therefore, a sense of ownership and pride in students mind plays an important role in dance pedagogy.

Furthermore, Côté (2006) suggests that,

Dance has the power to educate students of all ages to understand and appreciate dance and its vocabulary, to experiment with the creative process, to achieve a reasonable level of dancing skills, to experience the joy of expression through body movements, and to discuss artistic works knowledgably. (p. 28)

This claim highlights the capacity of dance to promote human qualities associated with creativity, appreciation of artistic form and joy of expression that contribute to lifelong learning and enjoyment.

In order to encourage these qualities in dance, the way dance teachers teach children becomes a major area of exploration. Stinson (1997) indicated that getting deeply interested in activities is more important than getting higher scores on standardized tests for students. Thus, increasing children's enjoyment and engaging them to learn dance is extremely important in the education field.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the teaching approaches that promote children’s engagement in dance and that enhance their enjoyment of dancing and reduce stress. My goals in this study are (a) to express my participant personal feelings about dance from lived experience through narratives that capture the joy of doing and learning dance for the reader to appreciate, and (b) to experience and describe how a dance teacher

in a local Middle School teaches in order to enable all the children in the class to enjoy dance.

Research Questions

My research question is “How does a dance teacher engage children and enable all children in a Middle school dance program to enjoy dance?” The following four sub-research questions were developed to help explore the main research question:

1. What are critical memories that inform your practice as a dance teacher?
2. What does teaching dance in local Middle school look like?
3. How does a dance teacher use different strategies to engage both girls and boys?
 - a. Why do some girls like to dance and others do not?
 - b. Why do some boys like to dance and others do not?

These research questions shaped this study to explore a current Middle school dance program. The sub-questions extend the study to explore how a dance teacher’s background influences her current and future teaching strategies. It will also indicate how to teach dance in middle school for both girls and boys, in order to promote the students’ enjoyment of dance.

Challenges to how the Research Makes Claim to Truth

The study was limited to a typical middle school dance teacher and the type of stories the teacher shared about her practice. In addition, this study is limited to the researcher’s ability to observe and describe the way the teacher teaches when observed and the insights she revealed about her teaching. However, as Diversi (1998) noted about stories that form the core to this study:

Short stories have a unique potential to bring lived experiences unknown to the reader closer to his or her own struggles for humanization. Dialogues and descriptions (of places, smells, looks), which are integral parts of short stories, have the power to move readers from abstract, sterile notions to the lively imagery of otherwise distant social realities. (p. 132-133)

The use of stories offers transferability as the key measure of what makes the study believable. Insights from the anecdotes help the reader imagine a similar context for typical middle school dance classes in North America. In order to create believable accounts for readers to understand dance pedagogy better, I have created data with extensive quotes and vivid descriptions to capture the reality of a middle school dance class. I used several ways to reach the truth.

1. Participants in this study offer self-reported accounts with the assumptions being that they will respond willingly and truthfully. The interpretation of responses will be valid and reliable and all participants will have dance and dance teaching experience. From my participants' stories, readers will be able to understand a middle school dance course that connects with the culture of the school. I will interview participants and observe the courses in order to make a link between the interviews and observation.
2. As a dancer and dance teacher from another culture, I will use my personal experiences to interpret the insights offered by the dancers. As the purpose of the study is to reveal insights on teaching dance, any bias in the perspective offers more diversity rather than limiting the discoveries to a fixed reality.

3. As a case study on teaching dance in schools, the purpose of the study is not to generalize but to explain the local meaning-making process in order to offer an account that can be transferred to other contexts of dance teaching.

4. The case study data were derived from interviews that were recorded and transcribed from audio conversations. The data were constructed from my observations of the classes. As Sparkes and Smith (2014) stated, ethnography tries to understand the diverse culture of a particular group. Participant observation is the most distinctive method in ethnography so researchers can deeply understand “the beliefs, motivations and behaviours of those involved than they can using any other approach” (pp. 34-35). The authors noted that “seeing, doing and feeling first-hand is deemed to be the best way to believing knowing and theorising sociologically about members of another culture” (p. 34). Thus, I both observed and participated in the class that I followed the dance teacher movements and observed students’ and teacher’s behaviors during the classes.

Operational Definitions

The following definitions explain the key words in this study that link back to the literature. They are listed below with links to the relevant literature.

Dance: recreational dance or freestyle dance experiences, based on “the development of (students’) self-expression and interpretation through motion, with self-knowledge as its aim” (Koff, 2000, p. 28).

Engagement: means people are becoming deeply interested in the activities (Stinson, 1997, p. 49).

Enjoyment: enjoyment “is beyond satisfying a need or desire, to achieve something unexpected, perhaps something even unimagined before”

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 46).

Flow: “A subjective state that people report when they are completely involved in something to the point of forgetting time, fatigue, and everything else but the activity itself” (Csikszentmihalyi & SpringerLink, 2014, p. 230).

Teaching strategy: “A teaching strategy is an approach taken by the facilitator of learning that enables the aim of the session to be achieved. For example, if transfer of new knowledge is the aim then a short lecture might be delivered; on the other hand, if attitudes need to be explored then a debate may be used”

(Woodhouse, 2011, p. 208).

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This literature review has been divided into five sections. Section One outlines the BC Integrated Resource Package (IRP) in dance and physical activity. Section Two discusses the importance of dance from the perspective of the British Columbia (BC) school curriculum. Section Three explains current issues and challenges in dance education programs. Section Four discusses why boys are not as engaged in dance. Section Five shows the factors related to the quality of the teaching process. Section Six is an overview of theories including flow, happiness, and process theories in dance. Finally, Section Seven summarizes teaching strategies in dance.

Section One: BC Integrated Resource Package (IRP) in Dance and Physical Activity

This Integrated Resource Package (IRP) describes the basic curriculum for teachers to implement dance and physical education. The BC IRP in dance is divided into three parts: “Dance Kindergarten to 7” (2010), “Dance 8 to 10” (1995) and “Dance 11 to 12” (1997). According to BC IRP in Dance 11 and 12:

This dance IRP has been developed to make dance accessible to all students and schools, while encouraging the physical, creative, intellectual, social, and emotional development of each individual. Dance education in the graduation years builds on previous learning by providing students with a balanced study of the nature of dance through active participation, observation, and inquiry. In addition, students at the graduation level will have continued opportunities for specialization in technique, choreography, performance, and research. The study of specialized dance genres will depend on the availability of trained instructors

within the school and community. Students will acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to be involved in dance as a lifelong interest or to pursue careers in this field. (Integrated Resource Package, 1997, p. 1-2)

The learning outcomes for dance K to 7 are: “creating dance,” “elements of dance,” “context,” and “presenting and performing.” As shown in Appendix A, the intent of dance for grades K to 7 is to engage and support students and give them new experiences. Moreover, “students at this age level enjoy relating to their peers and working with them in group situations” (Integrated Resource Package, 2010, p. 8). The pedagogy in dance K to 7 requires students to move in response to music and try to express themselves by using their body.

The learning expectations for dance 8 to 10 (1995) are the “elements of movement,” “creation and composition,” “presenting and performing,” and “dance and society.” In Appendix B, grades 8 to 10 require more techniques such as alignment, balance, breathing, flexibility, and strength. This level also requires students to create movement and performance skills and analyse dances from their culture, history, society, and music.

The learning expectation for Dance 11 to 12 (1997) “builds on and extends the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through Kindergarten to grade 7 and grades 8 to 10 dance curricula” (Integrated Resource Package, 1997, p. 1-2). It is separated into performance and choreography, which deal with “elements of movement,” “creation and composition,” “presenting and performing,” and “dance and society.” As shown in Appendix C, grades 11 and 12, the aim for this age group is to help students express

themselves through dance class. Students at this level should use movements connected in time with the music.

The learning outcomes from K to 12 involve a process of training development from basic physical movements to expression and dance creation. Especially in grades 11 and 12, the learning outcomes add “choreography” requirements for dance students with more detail about how to improve students' creation and insight into sharing feelings in dance. For example, in grades K to 7, students are not required to create dance. From grades 8 to 10, students are required to “create movement in response to the expressive elements of sound and music.” In grades 11 and 12, students need to learn how to “create dances in a wide range of pattern and narrative choreographic forms.”

As shown in Table 1 the BC IRP in physical education (2011) is divided into three age levels to improve students' physical and mental health, communication, and their endurance, strength, and flexibility. Dance is located in the curriculum as one movement area among five (games, alternative environment, dual individual, and dance). As such, dance represents the expressive side of movement that is not easily accomplished in the other areas.

Table 1. Summary of BC IRP for PE grades K to 12

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten to grade 7 (30 Minutes Daily) | Grades 8 and 9 (30 Minutes Daily or 150 Minutes Weekly) | Grades 10 to 12 (150 Minutes Weekly) |
| Boards/Authorities will offer 30 minutes of daily physical activity as part of students’ educational program | Boards/Authorities will have the flexibility to decide whether a school follows the 30 minutes daily or 150 minutes weekly requirement. The 150 minutes weekly requirement for students in Grades 8 and 9 will not form part of their Graduation Transitions program | Students must document and report a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity at a moderate to vigorous intensity per week. The 150 minutes weekly requirement for students in Grades 10 to 12 will form part of their Graduation Transitions program. |

Section Two: Importance of Dance

Dance is an important activity for children because it benefits both mental and physical health. First, dance helps children to express feelings and ideas. As Hanna (2010) indicated:

Dance is purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, culturally patterned, nonverbal body movement communication in time and space, with effort, and each genre having its own criteria for excellence. Dance conveys meaning through the use of

space, touch, proximity to another dancer or to an observer, nudity, stillness, and specific body postures and movements. (p. 213)

CruzBanks (2010) stated that the experience of dance supports emotional and spiritual maturation and gives young people strength and courage. In addition, he noted that dance provides people with a sense of cultural power and pride.

Second, dance contributes to increased health through exercising mind and body by resisting, reducing, and conquering stress (Hanna, 2010). For example, Murcia et al. (2010) examined the changes in anxiety in college students participating in dance classes over a period of three months and compared the results with the effects of participating in a music group, a physical education group, and a mathematics group. The authors found significant reductions in anxiety only in the dance group. Dance helps people to enhance physical and social activity, decreasing chronic diseases and “improving psychological well-being and overall quality of life” (Murcia et al., 2010, p. 150). Moreover, “dance provides an amazing workout. It tones muscles, trims the torso, builds bones, and strengthens the heart” (Leopold, 2004, p. 16).

Third, dance increases coordination and sensitivity to rhythmical stimuli. Murcia et al. (2010) stated:

Dancing may offer an attractive means to promote physical activity, since it appears to combine body movements with the aesthetical and emotional rewards of music. Music appears to uplift our subjective emotional state while stimulating body movements to synchronise to the temporal structure of the perceived rhythms. (pp. 149-150)

Section Three: Current Issues and Challenges in the Dance Education Program

Although dance plays a vital role in children's well-being, there are many problems in dance education. The first issue is that few students are interested in dance courses. Bonbright (1999) echoed this fact, indicating that dance education in many US schools is impoverished or non-existent. About 57% of elementary students and 80% of eighth grade students did not receive dance education in many of the nation's school districts. Approximately 20% of middle school students receive dance, but only 3% receive dance courses three to four times per week; 4% of students receive dance classes just one to two times; 13% of students less than one dance class per week (p. 35). Only 4% of students in elementary schools have dance courses taught by a dance specialist and 13% of elementary schools provide discrete subjects in dance courses (Gilbert, 2005, p. 32). The situation is similar in Canada. According to Gilbert (2005), 95% of children do not have the chance to access creation or composition classes before they get into university in Canada (p. 31).

The second issue is the lack of specialists in the field of dance education. Bonbright (1999) stated that in K to 12 dance education across the US, "Dance is being taught by certified dance specialists or by generalists and physical education teachers with extensive, little, or no training in dance" (p. 36). Also, only 10% of dance teachers follow state or district curricula to teach dance in middle schools (p. 35). Many schools do not employ sufficient professional dance teachers to teach dance. For instance, professional dance teachers teach only 4% of students; physical education teachers teach about 36% of students (p. 35). Furthermore, Gilbert (2005) noted:

In Canada, schools do not hire arts educators or dance specialists to teach in the schools . . . there are all classroom teachers who teach dance, and there are no courses in the elementary programs that provide in-depth work in dance. (p. 31)

In Australia, dance certification is not necessary for dance teachers. In Finland, they do not even have dance certification for teaching in public schools (p. 30). In the US, “quality dance programs in K-12 settings are not widespread, and dance is under the umbrella of physical education rather than the arts” (p. 30). Therefore, “in most countries, the biggest stumbling blocks to providing quality K-12 dance programs are the lack of teacher education, certification, and funding” (pp. 31-32).

The third issue is the environment that affects the quality of dance education. For example, some schools do not provide a good environment for teaching dance. As Bonbright (1999) noted:

Virtually no middle schools report teaching dance in rooms dedicated to dance education. By contrast, 86 percent of music instruction occurs in rooms dedicated to music education, and 88 percent of visual arts instruction occurs in facilities dedicated to visual arts education. Dance instruction takes place in gymnasiums, general facilities, or regular classrooms with furniture pushed to the side. (p. 35)

In addition, according to Bonbright (1999), in some schools:

Dance is often treated as an isolated product of the educational curriculum, as in the case of technique classes, usually ballet, tap, jazz, modern, or folk, country, and ethnic dancing, and it has little relationship to the curriculum or educational experiences of the student. (p. 35)

Thus, dance courses lack historical, aesthetic, critical, and cultural contexts; without a confident dance background teachers who teach dance do not use creative teaching methods to teach students or engage them to consider questions associated with understanding the core concepts of dance.

Sanderson (2001) illustrated how dance is marginalized in the current curriculum in schools in England; dance teachers do not train students to increase their aesthetic awareness (p. 127). Moreover, there is a downward trend in interest in “dance for students who are 15 years old or more” (p. 128). As a result, developing students' interest and aesthetic awareness of dance is important and necessary. It is especially important to modify and develop students' perceptions about dance in a positive way when they are young. As Sanderson noted:

If positive attitudes have not been established in the early years when attitudes are being formed, the adolescent stage may be too late, in which case efforts may more profitably be directed towards young children, including those at the nursery stage, although this rarely happens. (p. 128)

Dance traditionally involves training physical skills such as technique; however, Côté (2006) declared that some components are more important than physical skills in dance education. They include “creative and critical-thinking skills; group creations challenge communication and collaboration skills and cultivate the respect of others” (p. 28).

The fourth issue is the unbalanced male and female participation in dance courses. “The overwhelming majority of the student population engaged in dance education and training is female” (Risner, 2007, p. 140). This creates a stigma where dance is seen only

for females and by association somehow less virile than other physical pursuits. In contrast, the reality is that it is physically challenging, aesthetically enriching, cognitively expanding and a socially developing form of physical engagement.

The fifth and final issue is the lack of training time. Dance is in a disadvantageous situation because of “the competing demand of time by all school subjects” (Côté, 2006, p. 26). Bonbright (1999) noted, “Dance is being taught in thirty-minute periods less than once every two weeks or in fifty- to ninety-minute periods daily or weekly in block scheduling in US” (p. 36). Côté believed “a dance education course must include a weekly lecture hour and a minimum two-hour lab in the studio” (p. 30). School reality does not allow this, so what should dance look like in Canadian schools?

Section Four: Why are boys not engaging in dance

A widely accepted truth holds that more females prefer dance than do males. This fact prompts many researchers to consider the reason for the unbalanced male and female participation in dance courses.

The first reason why boys dislike dance is the negative social attitude toward male dancers; for example, many boys feel disappointed in the type of dance experiences provided by schools. Some boys are even reluctant to choose dance as an examination subject in the UK (Sanderson, 2001, p. 121). Sanderson examined the attitudes towards male dancers using a total of 1668 students (735 boys and 933 girls) who were from 11 to 16 years old in the UK. The research findings indicate many misunderstandings of dance as well as of male dancers. Some students said that male dancers look stupid if they do “soft” music. Male dancers should not use gentle music or do ballet or modern dance. Some students believed that it is hard for male dancers to do the movements. Furthermore,

some students said that it was silly for male dancers to wear tights. Some think that ballet dancing is just suitable for females and males should not do expressive movement (p. 125).

The second reason is the culture of gender and gender roles associated with dance education and training (Risner, 2007, p. 140). Male dancers are often classified as effeminate (Thomas, 1996, p. 507). According to Risner:

The dance community has only recently begun to illuminate the silence that surrounds gay and bisexual males' experiences in Western theatrical dance and its training. Recent scholarship on male youth in dance education suggests various kinds of prevailing social stigma, including narrow definitions of masculinity, heterosexist justifications for males in dance, and internalized homophobia in the field. (p. 139)

As a result, boys show negative attitudes towards dance because they think dance is a feminine activity (Sanderson, 2001, p. 128). Sanderson argued, "The male adolescent is insecure and unwilling to be associated with any activity which may be interpreted as feminine" (p. 128). Ferdun (1994) asserted, "Labelling dance as female prevents dance from functioning fully as an educational medium. It limits participation by anyone, male or female, who does not want to be associated with stereotyped gender images and practices" (p. 46).

The media is another factor that affects whether males choose dance. The media strongly influences stereotypical gender awareness and assumes requirements for males and females such as a different image, social roles, family roles, etc. The media is based on commercialization and the public tends to cater to the consumer psychology. It uses

social values and the dominant gender ideology to construct the gender model. As a result, it reflects mainstream culture, which is based on traditional ideas of gender awareness.

Male characteristics include being stable, sensible, tall, strong, and enterprising in terms of a career. In contrast, females are expected to be gentle, slim, petite, and compassionate and pay more attention to marriage, family or the emotional side of life.

These traditional attitudes influence males' views about dance. Males are encouraged to be successful at athletic sports rather than expressive movement forms like dance. Deaner et al. (2012) stated, "Men have been substantially more likely than women to engage in contests involving extreme physical aggression" (pp. 1-2).

The power of the media puts great psychological pressure on males to guide what they should do and what they should be good at. It may lead them to choose a major on the basis of social acceptance instead of what they would like to do.

Section Five: Influential Factors in Teaching the Dance Process

Researchers have demonstrated that school (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Patrick et al., 2007), society (Conway, 1981; Sanderson, 2001) and family (Coleman & Hendry, 1990) influence students' engagement and their academic achievement.

First, school plays an important role in affecting students' learning process in dance. Moreover, school engagement is associated with students' behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. "Previous research has demonstrated links between school engagement and adolescent outcomes, such as school dropout, substance use, mental health, and academic outcomes" (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011, p. 1650). In addition, researchers found that students who get school support and maintain good relationships with teachers are more engaged and participate more in school (p. 1650). Pianta et al. (2002) stated that high-quality

classrooms are based on a children-centred environment and the high quality of teachers. For example, good teachers provide constructive feedback, open-ended questions and multi-modal activities for students (p. 236). Patrick et al. (2007) evaluated the relationships between classroom and engagement for children and found that students access “self-regulatory strategies and engage in task-related interaction” when they get emotional support from teachers and peers (p. 93). Thus, students-centred pedagogy can motivate students’ interest and engage them in dance class.

Second, social factors are always associated with dance education. They influence children's attitudes towards dance, such as in the culture of gender bias or misunderstanding. For instance, the attitude that male dancers are gay and effeminate discourages males from participating in dance class (Sanderson, 2001, p. 128). The media also influences students' perception and awareness of knowledge (Conway, 1981, p. 174).

Third and last, Coleman and Hendry (1990) indicated that family is one of the major factors affecting students' attitudes (p. 9). For example, children who do not get support or engagement in dance from their family might be less motivated to take dance.

The review of the literature suggested three major factors—school, social, and family attitudes—should be considered in the dance-teaching process. These three factors are also associated with human learning. As Gilbert (2005) stated:

Humans may first be lured to a subject through an extrinsic reward such as a trophy. But ultimately, intrinsic rewards such as receiving positive and immediate feedback, being in control of one's learning, and feeling passionate about a subject are what create a lifelong desire to learn. (p. 34)

In summary, for dance teaching to be successful, it needs to increase students' energy and increase students' energy, collaboration with peers, and self-autonomy.

Section Six: Overview of Theories in Dance Education

The following three theories will use to guide the understanding of dance education: (a) flow, (b) happiness, and (c) process. These theories show how to engage students in dance class. I use these theories to explore students' insight, feelings, and expression, so that I might find an effective pedagogy to motivate students to learn and enjoy dance.

Flow theory in dance and dance education.

Flow theory helps to explain the sensation a student gets when students get when they feel like a dancer in a dance class with other students who suddenly let go and flow with the music and their peers. Even dance teachers experience this sense of flow when they feel the students in their class suddenly get the dance, move without feeling awkward and move with a sense of natural freedom. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) stated that flow happens in situations that involve challenge, but not so much challenge as to produce anxiety. Individuals need to control their environment and actions in order to experience flow (p. 46). Moreover, the experience of enjoyment means: “beyond satisfying a need or desire, to achieve something unexpected, perhaps something even unimagined before” (p. 46).

Flow theory, as an approach to intrinsic motivation, is the mental process that allows people to feel an energized focus, complete involvement, and enjoyment in what they do. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explained that flow leads people to screen out unwanted stimuli and concentrate on what is relevant for the moment. It is a tool that

helps people to control their psychic energy and consciousness. Therefore, “people who achieve flow more regularly pay close attention to the minute details of their environment, discover hidden opportunities for action, set goals, monitor progress using feedback and keep setting bigger challenges for themselves” (p. 305). The dimensions of the flow experience are diverse:

- a. People who have a sense of flow focus on a limited stimulus field and have full concentration and complete involvement;
- b. If people understand flow, they might merge action and awareness;
- c. Self-consciousness can disappear when people control their actions and deal with the situation, at least in principle;
- d. People might have a sense of time becoming distorted; and
- e. People's experiences become their own reward (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p. 90).

The key characteristic of flow theory is interactionism. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) indicated, “Flow research has emphasized the dynamic system composed of person and environment, as well as the phenomenology of person environment interactions” (p. 90). There are two key models of experience, consciousness and the self, which relate to the flow theory. The conditions of flow are diverse:

- a. The challenges and people's capacities should be in balance. For instance, people should set a goal at an appropriate level so they have the capacity to achieve it; however, the balance is sometimes hard to control. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) stated, “If challenges begin to exceed skills, one first becomes vigilant and then anxious; if skills begin to exceed challenges, one first

relaxes and then becomes bored” (p. 90). As a result, people should adjust the relationship between their levels of skill and challenge in order to get the sense of flow experience. The goals should be set clearly at every step of the way; and

b. People can get feedback from their action immediately. (p. 90)

There are two types of intervention in flow theory:

a. The first type is “those seeking to shape activity structures and environments so that they foster flow or obstruct it less” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p. 99); and

b. The second type is “those attempting to assist individuals in finding flow” (p. 99).

For instance, many schools emphasize creating a learning phenomenon in order to enhance flow experiences and help students to develop capacity and interest in studying. Students can choose activities that they are interested in. Teachers are required to support students' selection and help students to identify new challenges when their skills grow (p. 99). In conclusion, the goal of flow theory is to help students know what they enjoy and how to pay attention to these activities, rather than enhance their state of flow directly.

Happiness theory and dance education.

In dance, for happiness to emerge there should be a good learning atmosphere. By this we mean that students should feel a sense of fun from challenges created in the learning process and be interested in the eventual anticipated performance. In a dance class students should be energized by working with peers in a supportive and encouraging environment, have a sense of autonomy and look forward to every class. However, in the middle dance program, many students do not have a sense of what dance is about and do not have any idea of what they could do as dancers.

Happiness is an important outcome in people's life; it can be defined as a positive emotion. Self-reported happiness, as a general evaluation of life, is associated with “wellbeing, contentment, pleasure, and satisfaction, and an absence of negative effect” (Moljord, Moksnes, Eriksen, & Espnes, 2011, p. 633). Mahon and Yarcheski (2002) stated, “Happiness is the preponderance of positive effect over negative effect with a distinct focus on the affective evaluation of one’s life situation” (p. 306). They continued, “Happiness can help buffer the stress associated with developmental challenges. Knowledge of happiness can play an important role in the development of health promotion strategies for early adolescents” (p. 306). Happiness traits include self-esteem, personal control, optimism, and extraversion (Lu, 1999, p. 80). Several factors influence happiness among adolescents such as teachers' support, good school experiences, a good environment, satisfaction in life and self-efficacy (Moljord et al., 2011, pp. 633-634). In my research, happiness is an important theory because it indicates the level of engagement by students in the dance being taught. When students are learning to dance, the evidence of happiness in their actions engages them and increases their interest in dance. This research deals with how to increase students’ enjoyment and happiness in dance class.

Process theory in dance and dance education.

“Process theory focuses on the cognitive processes that influence behaviour. It contends that motivation lies in the intrinsic desire to improve personally, to solve problems, and to gain understanding” (Criss, 2011, p. 63).

Process theory offers a way of understanding what makes dance appealing to so many people. Critically, when learning to dance, students meet challenges that enable

them to become dancers. They do not even have a cognizance about dance. In this situation, dance teachers should make a plan about the process of teaching dance content from basic to complex movements, setting suitable goals for students. In the process it gives students' feedback immediately, so that students have a sense of confidence and a feeling that they can dance. This means that in order for teachers to teach dance effectively, students should be able to participate in what they are going to learn, have equal opportunity to reach success, a sense of quality, personal improvement and of outcome during the learning process.

The six aspects of process theory include: expectancy, equity, attribution, self-efficacy, goal setting, and autonomy.

Expectancy means people can expect the results of their behaviours (Criss, 2011, p. 63); therefore, teachers should engage children so that it is possible to reach success. "If a teacher can encourage students to have constructive self-perceptions of their competence, and optimistic expectancies of success, students will perform better, be more engaged, exert more effort, persist longer, and be more successful" (p. 63).

Equity is another important aspect of the process theory. "It is based on the idea that people are motivated by social comparison and that they will act to eliminate any perceived unfairness" (p. 64). When students feel the class is fair, they will trust and be committed to the process of learning (p. 64). Thus, teachers should treat children fairly in dance class. Competition among children is not an effective way to improve children's motivation in dance.

Attribution means perceiving the cause of an outcome (p. 65). As Criss indicated, it is important to provide precise and unbiased feedback to children, which develops their self-efficacy and confidence to success (p. 65).

“Self-efficacy is a perception of performance capability, a belief that one can achieve, and the confidence to respond positively to feedback even if it is negative” (p. 65). Success generally leads to further success. Teacher positive feedback helps children to build self-efficacy (p. 65).

Goal setting influences children's motivation and engagement, particularly “specific and challenging goals result in better performance, and outcome-oriented goals give focus and energy” (p. 65). If teachers can help children to choose a goal with an appropriate and clear challenge, children might reach success more easily (p. 65).

Autonomy is the last aspect in process theory. Criss (2011) noted that if students are given responsibility and selection, they will be more positive in their learning. If they can decide their goals, they will show more responsibility and be serious about their own learning (p. 65). Therefore, according to Criss (2011), dance teachers should:

1. Encourage feelings of autonomy and self-direction.
2. Help the child to feel safe enough to take risks in the classroom. Create a nurturing and trusting environment.
3. Teach students that they are in control of the results of their actions and that failure is temporary and instructional.
4. Facilitate the ability of a person to be self-determining and to have a part in decisions and choices that affect him or her.
5. Help students feel empowered, and self-esteem and expectancy will be raised.

6. Invite students to have input into their own assessments, and they will be more willing to accept responsibility (p. 64).

These three theories briefly describe how dance might be taught in schools by prompting students' motivation in dance class. Teachers should set a proper challenge to students. “Help students to choose goals that are personally relevant, challenging, clear, and compelling” (Criss, 2011, p. 64). Teachers should also help students realize how to achieve a goal step-by-step and give them emotional response and feedback. The curriculum should be connected to students' lives so they can express their emotions and engage in dance.

Helping students to enjoy dance is important in happiness theory. Teachers should provide a good learning environment for students and help students to feel a sense of respect and trust. Teachers should control tasks, stress, and fear for students. They should be fair in class and treat every student equity. Finally, “respect students, ask for permission to help them, listen for feelings beneath the surface, and watch for body language and group dynamics” (Criss, 2011, p. 64).

Teachers should not only engage students to have high expectations, but also increase their confidence and help them to be a success in the classroom. Moreover, teachers should help students to build up their self-perception when they have competence and help students choose tasks properly and encourage them to learn from one another. In addition, teachers should help students to realize that “their success can be attributed to their skill and their efforts and not to good luck” (Criss, 2011, p. 64). Teachers should show students that their actions influence their results to help them to believe that “competence is a controllable aspect of their development and that their

abilities will change and expand over time” (p. 64). Teachers should encourage students to feel a sense of self-direction and awareness that they can control the results of their actions in order to raise their self-esteem and expectancy.

This section describes some key theoretical ideas that influence the process of teaching dance: ideas of attribution, self-efficacy, goal setting, and autonomy are connected and have been used to guide the analysis in this study. In Chapter 5, I will discuss process theory and the participants’ pedagogy.

Section Seven: Teaching Strategies in Dance Education

Some approaches in dance pedagogy include engagement, fun activities, motivation, mindful strategy, and innovation. These strategies influence students’ behaviour during dance classes and show how to involve students in the learning process. The approaches in dance pedagogy are practices of flow, happiness, and process theory based on students’ insights and behaviour from increasing their enjoyment to engaging them in dance.

First, engagement plays a major role in dance education. As Stinson (1997) indicated, getting deeply interested in activities is more important than getting higher scores on standardized tests. In recent years, however, many students have lost interest in studying and some of them even feel unmotivated and disengaged (p. 49). In addition, many students are not motivated to meet the arts standards and some of them even refuse lessons (p. 49). Thus, teachers should strengthen student engagement and help them to become interested in the learning process. In order to find an effective way to engage students, one question should be raised: Why do students like to dance?

Second, encouraging students to have a sense of “fun” is a vital strategy in dance. Stinson (1997) found that “fun” is the word most often used by the students to describe why they like to dance. Their response can be divided into three categories.

1. “Fun as social interaction” (p. 53): Some students have fun because they can communicate and work with their friends;
2. “The fun of making up stuff” (p. 54): Many students prefer to “make up stuff for themselves instead of what the teacher says to do” (p. 54); and
3. “Moving around.” Stinson (1997) noted, “Fun to most of these students meant to move around and do new things, to make up stuff and work with other people” (p. 55).

Bond and Stinson (2000) emphasized the function of moving around that many children like in dance class and expressing their feelings (p. 57). For example, one child said:

I thought I would die. When Donna Wood comes out to do her solo I wanted to laugh, I wanted to cry. I wanted to jump up there. It makes you want to dance yourself but at the same time I wouldn't dare start moving cause I might tremor what's going on up there (p. 59).

Some students enjoy dance because they feel a sense of freedom when dancing, which is an intrinsic feeling for students. Some students said, “Dance was freedom. It was all big and you could move around. It was a home away from home you could say, to me, ‘cause I felt real good when I was there—like it was my house—put it like that” (Bond & Stinson, 2000, p. 60). The self-perception is a factor that students like in dance, especially their “inner self.” Bond and Stinson found that students use the language of the inner self when they describe dance experiences. “Dance really lets me explore my inner

self, what I'm really like, who I really am” one student said (p. 63). Bond and Stinson found that older students like to find an authentic self in dance; however, young children prefer to become someone or something else. A number of students enjoy dance because they lose awareness and forget the world. According to Bond and Stinson, some young children lose awareness of the outside world and feel they are in another place or time when they dance. One child said, “When I'm dancing . . . like, I'm the only person in that little world. I have my own little world I can go to. Then I come back to the earth” (p. 67). This child’s feelings while dancing are an intrinsic expression that connects with flow, happiness, and process theories. From these kinds of insights by students, we can understand the value of emotion in dance. It also shows that students' emotion and motivation are more important than dance skills or routines.

Some students like to dance due to the factor of transcendence in space and/or time in dance. Dance teachers, relaxation, stress release, focus, concentration, and freedom are all factors that affect students' enjoyment of dance.

In contrast, some students do not like dance. They feel bored because the class does not make sense for them or does not meet their expectations. Some students suffer from stress in dance class because of the competition. Some students are too shy to express themselves or do not have the confidence to dance. Not liking the teacher, the music, or the activities were also reasons for not enjoying dance (Stinson, 1997, pp. 56-57).

Third, motivation is another strategy in dance. Minton and McGill (1998) evaluated students' changes in the SKAT (Spatial Kinesthetic Awareness Test), once at the beginning of term and once at the end of term, and found that:

Student improvement on the SKAT does seem to be affected by what dance teachers say and how they say it, since significant relationships did exist between improved overall SKAT scores and the percentage of teacher time spent in response presentation and motivation feedback. (p. 48)

Therefore, “the initial presentation, monitoring, performance feedback, and organization are important but certain kinds of feedback (response presentation) and the class atmosphere (motivation feedback) seem to have a greater effect on student progress” (Minton & McGill, 1998, p. 48).

Mindful pedagogy is another effective strategy in dance education. Dance as a form of creative expression is a skill that can be acquired or inspired through sound teaching. Sansom (2009) indicated that creative dance is most suited to children; it can help children to “develop non-verbal ways of expressing and communicating imaginative ideas” (p. 168). Teacher-created dance frameworks refer to children as creators, performers, and spectators of dance (p. 168). These three aspects form a conceptual framework that enables young children to create their own dance, coupled with a sense of ownership (p. 168).

Fourth and finally, innovation is another important pedagogy in dance. Compared with traditional pedagogy, innovation pedagogy deals with student-centred learning instead of teacher-centred pedagogy (Côté, 2006, p. 28). Innovation promotes student interactions and critical thinking. Côté noted, “The role of the teacher becomes that of a facilitator of learning—one who plans, observes, suggests, guides, and motivates students to engage in their learning process” (p. 28). The traditional method does not encourage students to use creative ways of solving problems, while innovation in teaching helps

students to be creative in the learning process. It engages students to work in a group in order to build collaborative skills. Côté added, “By working cooperatively in a choreographic project, students learn to take turns leading, to respect group members’ ideas, and to help one another refine their performance skills before the dance presentation” (p. 31). As a result, dance teachers should develop initiatives and create an enjoyable atmosphere in dance class. They should understand students' culture, favourite dance styles, music, hobbies and other aspects of their lives and provide an opportunity for students and parents to express their feelings (p. 32).

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this research is to explore the teaching approaches that two school-based teachers in Victoria use to (a) promote a students' engagement in dance, and (b) enhance students' enjoyment of dancing. This chapter describes the methodology used to answer this research purpose. The chapter is divided into the following sections: research design, sampling, data collection, instrument, data analysis, and timeline of the study.

Design

This study used autoethnography, ethnography and a case study to explain both participants' and my personal experience with dance teaching. It allows readers to compare others' experiences with their own, so they can come to understand dance teachers' insight and feelings in the teaching process as well as students' behaviours, insight, and feelings in the process of learning dance.

I used autoethnography to reflect my personal experiences and share the love of dance to my teacher participant. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) declared, "Autoethnography expands and opens up a wider lens on the world" (p. 275). Moreover, autoethnography is based on a "reflexive" method to express personal experiences. Dance autoethnography provides a way to motivate children and let them enjoy dance. My goal in autoethnography is to share my personal dance stories with my teacher participant to build connection and trust with her. I used the methods such as "dramatic recall, strong metaphors, vivid characters, unusual phrasings, and the holding back on interpretation" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 73) in my research. I interviewed one teacher involved in this study to explore her passion for dancing and her motivation for teaching dance. Through sharing

the commonalities in our stories of becoming dance teachers I hoped to build a sense of trust and mutual commitment with my teacher participant as we explored the challenges and successes of teaching dance in one school. For example, I included an extract from my experience using autoethnography to explore why I am so passionate about dance.

Ethnography is another approach I used in this study. An ethnographic approach shares a phenomenological foundation with other perspectives on dance (Sklar, 1991, p. 6). “Ethnography links corporeal conditions to the internal states of human beings. It concerns how the physical practice of dance imbues social space and human relationships with cultural energy” (CruzBanks, 2010, p. 21). As Sparkes and Smith (2014) indicated, “The aim of ethnography is to understand the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members” (p. 34).

I used ethnographic observation to observe two dance classes in one school over the course of a term. My goal was to analyse teacher behaviours with the students. I also observed students' learning responses and gendered behaviours. My goal in ethnography was to explore dance teachers' experiences in dance education by interviewing one current dance teacher and accessing information on how to engage students in enjoying dance. I analysed students' responses in two dance classes and the insights from two students (one boy, one girl) about dance in each class.

After observation, the following is a collective case study which combined multiple cases into a single study and related to the observed teaching of dance. I interviewed the dance teacher and two students (one boy, one girl) in each class and selected the students randomly and voluntarily and depended on the willingness of the students to be interviewed.

A case study is research that analyses a single case. In this approach you can analyse situations and issues deeply. The analysis allows the researcher to indicate the details of the context and the type of interaction, based on the environment, in order to help readers understand how important different events, circumstances, and activities are in the case (Stake, 1995, pp. 1-2). The case study may include “unexpected occurrences, unique and innovative interventions, unusual circumstances or typical experiences that illustrate important principles in consultation” (Giges & Van Raalte, 2012, p. 483). My aim in this case study is to gain a deep analysis of teachers’ and students’ insights and feelings during the process of learning dance in order to discuss how to engage both boys and girls in dance.

Data Collection

The data collection was divided into three steps:

1. The first step in the data collection was to explore the teacher participant’s narratives and then for me to write about teacher participant personal dance teaching experiences. I used autoethnography to recall my personal experiences about dance teaching by using photographs, journals, and recordings to my teacher participant to build connection and trust.
2. The second step was to observe two dance classes and to record teacher’s and students' class behaviours.
3. The third step was to interview dance teacher and students in relation to observation. Questions for the dance teacher and students emerged from the use of the ethnographic method to gather insights on dance lessons and then students’ insights on those shared their experiences. For the dance teacher, I asked

questions about her personal experience of dance in relation to our stories of why we became dance teachers and the observed dance classes.

Throughout the research process, I reminded to the dance teacher that participation was voluntary and that she could withdraw from the study at any time. I asked the students about their personal feelings about the class. The language of the interview was considered appropriate for the age of the students. Letters were sent to the students and their parents, distributed by the dance teacher prior to the observation of lessons. These letters explained the purpose of the research as an inquiry into the teaching of dance and that students had the opportunity to be interviewed after the dance course. A parent or guardian and the student dancer signed the consent form if they volunteered to be interviewed. The meeting room for students was in a familiar environment, such as classrooms or dancing studios to ensure they felt comfortable.

In all, one dance teacher and four students were interviewed. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour and I recorded the dialogue digitally and transcribed verbatim. The dance teacher completed and signed a consent form before joining this study. I interviewed the dance teacher three times:

First interview (Appendix D), before the course, asking questions 1 and 2 about her personal experience and passion for dance. Next I asked questions 3, 6, and 7 about engagement in dance . Questions 4 and 5 concerned the attitude toward girls and boys learning dance. Question 8 was whether the dance teacher had any questions for me.

In the second interview, I asked details based on the first interview. For example, in the first interview, the dance teacher talked about her most memorable performance. In

the second interview I asked questions such as: Who was the audience? Did your parents watch it? What are your feelings on stage?

The third interview (Appendix E) took place after the final class. Questions 1 and 2 were asked about the course. Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 asked about comparing classes and teaching strategies. Questions 8 to 11 asked about certain students in the classes.

Students interview (Appendix F) is that students received a letter saying that their teacher was engaging in the study as described. I interviewed the four students only once after the final class; all the students were volunteers. Question 1 was an overview of students' feelings about the course. Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 asked for students' feedback about the course activities. Questions 6, 7, and 8 asked about students' attitude toward gender in dance. Question 9 explored students' feelings about their peers. Question 10 discussed students' feedback about Lisa's teaching. The interviews remain confidential and all names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Qualitative Methods Used in the Study

I used a combination of ethnography and autoethnography in my study. The following section describes why I used ethnography and autoethnography.

My process involved two tools. For the autoethnography, I reflected on my own experiences learning to dance and to teach dance with my teacher participant. After that I interviewed the teacher asking for examples from her about when she first started to dance and then tracking her development as a teacher from performer to middle school dance teacher.

For ethnography, I used ethnography in the observation of two dance classes and for interviewing one dance teacher. After interviewing the dance teacher, I interviewed

two students (one boy, one girl) in each class. Thus, I interviewed four students (two boys and two girls) totally.

The participant I asked to volunteer is a teacher of dance for two classes in middle school for children 11 to 13 years old in British Columbia, Canada. The four students who volunteered were selected to represent a range of attitudes to dance. The dialogue was recorded by audio and all names used in this paper were pseudonyms. Interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim.

Prior to doing this study on a middle school dance teacher I analysed my own experiences of becoming a dance teacher. I collected reflective information by using past video, journals, and pictures of myself from a pilot paper developed earlier in my master's program. I shared my personal experience in dance learning and teaching with my participant in this research in order to build a sense of shared insight on our passion for doing and teaching dance. Through questioning the teacher and sharing my own experiences of learning to dance I was able to develop understanding of (a) what we shared in common in our dance learning and teaching experiences, and (b) what differed. This analysis offered a frame of reference with which to consider our shared insights into how to encourage students' enjoyment in dance. In Chapter 1, I told one story from this process that showed my passion for doing dance and, in particular, the sense of flow I experienced as I was being taught. Below is another extract from the autoethnographic paper that captures my first experience in the role of a teacher of dance.

Dance affects me in many ways. It helps me relax and release stress. As a child when I danced I forgot chores and unhappy things; I just enjoyed the feeling of movement. Dance is like different stories I like to experience. The most important

thing about dance is that it helps me to find confidence. When I studied dance, I found I was very good at it. I could learn the actions and movements fast, often more quickly than my peers. As a result, many girls came and asked me how to do different steps and I became popular through my dancing ability. My confidence grew because of these encounters. When my peers performed the movement correctly, I felt happy for them because we had improved together.

When I was 11, I started to create dances. One dance I remember clearly was a Chinese folk dance where we played the role of peacocks that lived in a forest. I used a lively melody that described happy moments and good relationships between the peacocks. As I created the dance I started to realize how you need not only beautiful actions and movement, but a structure and meaningful theme. As we prepared to perform I often felt nervous that we would not be able to reproduce the movements as needed, and although we practiced and practiced, the dance never seemed to be perfect. When the day came to perform, the audience filled the school hall and I was very nervous. As we came onto the stage, the lights were so bright we could not see anybody. We performed as if in a trance. The resulting performance reflected traditional folk dance but also the creative movements that we had developed ourselves, acknowledging the traditions but at the same time owning them. It was a great success and is now a cherished memory.

For this performance I got my first dancing award, “Best Choreography Award” and “Best Dancing Award.” Thus, I got a sense of accomplishment in the study of

dance. This experience led to going to an academy of dance school where I started to study dance as a professional dancer.

As Sparks (2002) indicated, this story highlights “dramatic recall, strong metaphors, vivid characters, unusual phrasings, and the holding back on interpretation to invite the reader to emotionally relive the events with the author” (p. 73).

To stimulate my memory I used past journals in which I had recorded some feelings about my training and dance event experiences. In addition, videos and pictures helping me to re-construct the experiences. The videos and pictures showed my past experiences vividly, which in turn evoked forgotten feelings. Below is one narrative about my interest and passion for dance. I selected this narrative to show my emotional process and how motivation engaged me in learning dance. In the same way, I encouraged the research participant to recollect her past experiences of learning to dance and teaching dance.

In conversations I shared experiences with the participant about dance. I believe this helped to develop a trusting relationship with the research participant, as it became obvious that we shared a common personal passion and interest in dance. The participant in this study told me many of her stories, which will be described in the next chapter.

In this study I interviewed the participant three times. The first interview was before the first class. I asked about her personal dance stories and her belief in dance. At the same time, the participant asked me about my teaching background. After transcribing the first interview, I taped it and printed it for Lisa to review. Also, I asked for more details about her experience. The third interview took place after the final class when I asked her opinion of the course.

Data Analysis

The following section will introduce the process of data analysis. Figure 1 shows the coding process used in Qvalyzer (2012), a text analysis program. Note how portions of data are labelled as fragments to be associated with other fragments to create categories.

1. I transferred and coded participants and my data by using the Qvalyzer text analysis package, to assist in the analysis and organization of the data (Qvalyzer, 2012).
2. After coding data and locating categories and cross-references, I developed themes for the dance classes. In addition, I created representative narratives for the teacher that capture the essence of our being dance teachers.
3. I developed the discussions on findings in relation to the literature and the research questions on how to teach dance and engage all students in the enjoyment of dance. This resulted in 125 fragments that I organized into four categories.

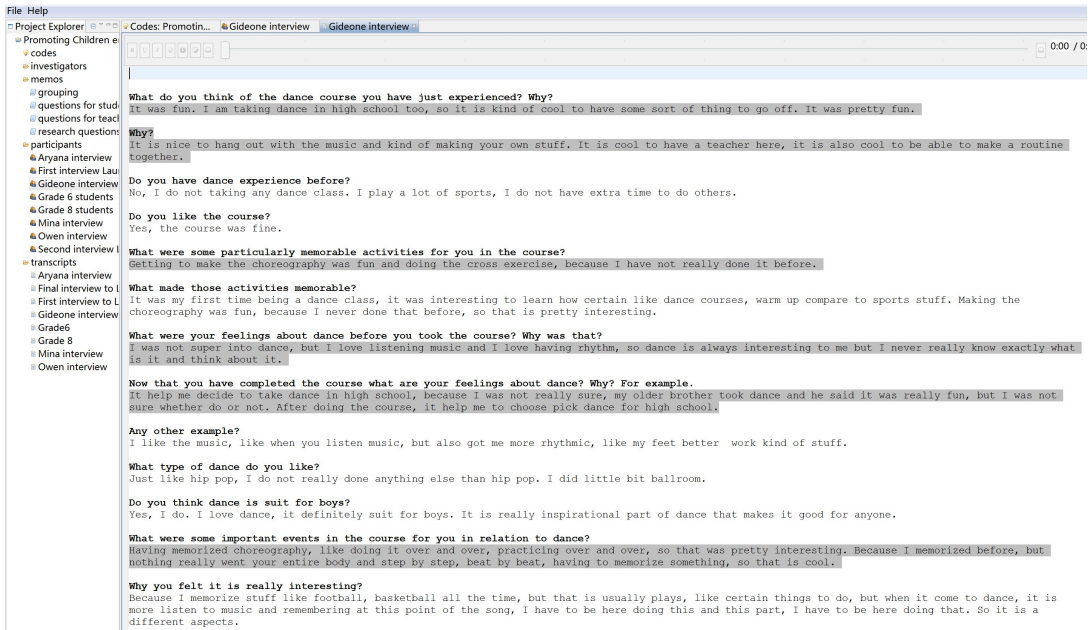


Figure 1. Sources From Participants

4. Analysed data were combined into a case study for dance teaching in two typical BC classes.

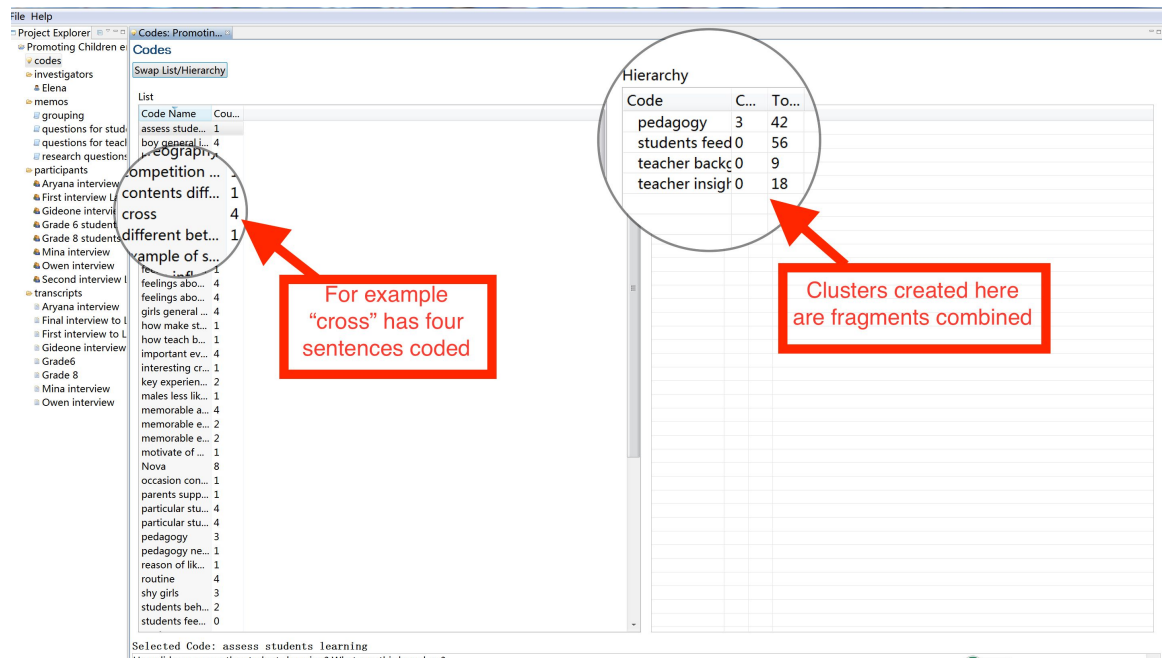


Figure 2. Sources from codes

Timeline

This research process took place over a year. In September, the proposal was written. The ethics and consent form approval were submitted in November. I collected the first interview data in December. Between February and April, the observation data were collected. The second interview data for the dance teacher occurred in March. The third interview for both dance teacher and students took place in April. The data was analysed from April to August. I wrote my thesis from September to December and the thesis defence completed in March.

Chapter 4. Findings

In this chapter I will outline the findings that have emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data. As noted in Chapter 3, the themes that emerged from the data came from a process of constant comparison between sources of data that included participant observation, participants' interviews and artifacts used in the dance class. Participant observation involved following dance teacher's actions in the lessons as well as observing students' and dance teacher's behaviors during the class. During lessons I made quick notes as participant in some activities where appropriate, or as an observer from the side. The later as the researcher I wrote out the notes into full descriptive sentences. These descriptive notes were then combined with interview observations in the text analysis program Qualyzer as discussed earlier on page 44 where they were coded through constant comparisons into categories and then developed into themes.

As indicated by Spradley (1979, 1980) the themes that are reported below represent the interaction of ideas, principles and actions noted and labelled into common domains that generate meaning in the culture of these typical middle school dance classes. As Spradley (1980) noted, themes in this case are "any principle recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (p. 141)

Returning to the Research Questions of the Project

My research project asks: "How does a middle school dance teacher engage children in a dance lesson and enable all children to enjoy dance?" To explore this question I developed the following five sub-research questions that guided this study:

1. What are critical memories that inform a middle school teacher's practice as a dance teacher?
2. What does teaching dance in local middle school look like?
3. How does a dance teacher use different strategies to engage both girls and boys?
 - a. Why do some girls like to dance and others do not?
 - b. Why do some boys like to dance and others do not?

These questions were used as a reference point through data collection and analysis. They served to focus the inquiry on the key elements identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 related to promoting school-based dance for all students (BC IRP in dance, 2010; Bonbright, 1999; Sanderson, 2001; Côté, 2006; Risner, 2007; Sanderson, 2001).

The focus of the research questions were (a) teacher's lived experience of being a dancer and learning to teach dance, (b) need to describe what dance in schools looks like, and (c) the challenge of engaging both boys and girls in dance to combat cultural stereotypes associated with dance.

Introducing the Context and the Participants

In this section I will introduce the main participants in this study and the context of the dance classes. Names of the participants and the context have been changed to protect anonymity. All participants signed an ethics form that had been revised in accordance with Tri-council guidelines and regulations and approved by the University of Victoria human research ethics board.

Lisa the dance teacher

Lisa is a dance teacher in a middle school in BC Canada. She is about 30 years old, and about 5 feet 8 inches tall, with brown curly hair. She likes wearing black dance

tight pants and tops and black dance shoes. She told me she first started to dance when she was three years old and took ballet lessons at a community centre. She really loved dancing and loved to dance with music.

I always like it. I mean I do not really remember details. But I love dance with the music and move with the music and I was always like creating little dances at home. My sister and I would like to put on a little show for our parents and we would like to prepare.

During my observation time, what impressed me was Lisa's patient and friendly approach to all the students. She liked kids and was always smiling at them. Before the class started, Lisa met the students in the hallway. She liked to talk with them and students liked to share little stories with her. Lisa was interested in being involved in this study because she was interested in hearing about the students' insights into their dance experiences. She was always trying to find ways to involve the students and for them to enjoy her dance class. She noted:

I was interested in taking part because I am committed in a process of teaching dance to engage students and naturally I thought that it was interesting that someone was studying how teachers engage students in dance in school settings.

In this section, I will introduce Lisa's personal experience as a student and a dance teacher.

Lisa's youth experiences in dance

Lisa first started dance when she was three and took ballet lessons at a community centre. She loved to dance to music. She was liked to create little dances at home. Her younger sister and she liked to do a little show for their parents. They usually did ballet

and jazz at home. She loved dance so much; she told me dance always made her feel energized. “I guess I always felt it was exciting and fun and I always found to be sort of freeing. When I am dancing, I am often not really thinking about other things, like an escape kind of.”

She liked the way dance made her feel and she liked performing and being excited. “It was nerve wracking. It was fun thing to do, costume and you know prepared for it and I like practice things and try to get better and master something.” Lisa did many different styles of dance, such as lyrical dance, a kind of dance between ballet and jazz, and contemporary. Her parents were really supportive of her dance, especially her mom who did a lot of costume sewing and drove her to lessons, competitions and festivals.

Her dance teacher was a young and nice lady and good at choreography. When Lisa was 19 years old, she danced with her. Lisa told me that her dance teacher was very positive and encouraging. She loved her dance teacher so much. She said:

She was really nice and I liked her choreography. She came up with good dances that was [sic] fun to do. She was a good dancer for herself and she was fun to dance with. She was close to us and just 10 years old than us, so she was fun and connected with us very well.

Lisa indicated that this person was an excellent dancer and teacher. From Lisa’s description, I can feel that Lisa admired her dance teacher, which influenced Lisa to be a better dancer. As Lisa said, “She clearly loved to dance and her passion for and commitment to it made her inspiring to be around and made me want to work hard and be a better dancer.”

From Lisa's story, we see that a dance teacher's personal passion can affect and engage students to work hard and be involved in the learning process. Moreover, the dance teacher's commitment to dancing well and to performing for an audience makes students admire her (or him). This engagement helps students get a sense of enjoyment through dance.

Lisa's competitions and festivals

Lisa joined dance competitions when she was a child. For example, she participated in a provincial competition in Calgary. It included all different dance schools around Calgary and Edmonton. She did big group dances, including about 15 to 20 children. She also did some three-person groups, duets and solos. The festival competition had awards like a pin for gold, silver or bronze. Lisa received some gold, silver, and bronze pins. After she won the awards, she was very happy. She said, "I was very happy. I got some gold, silver and bronze. Sometimes, when you get bronze, you do not feel happy, but it all depends on how difficult the dance was. There are a lot of different factors."

Her parents were always very supportive and encouraging. She said, "They did not get upset if I did not get gold, silver or anything like that. They were supportive no matter what. They just said: "Try your best."

After performing, she indicated that she was always very excited, happy, and felt successful no matter what the accomplishment.

It is nice to relive it in some ways, because sometimes you feel nervous, and nice to have completed it and feel like successful in some way. I remember a time when I was on stage and preparing for a performance and just felt excitement and

connect to dance and performance. I can remember driving to lessons and being “I do not want to do it.” But other days, having a performance makes you feel really excited and makes you feel like you need to keep going, right? That was a big part of it. Also, I did a lot of dance exams so I have to practice and really work hard to pass those exams. That was a good feeling too. So those examples that, I guess, show that feeling of connectedness with lessons and devotion to it.

From her insights, we see that performance can increase students’ interest in dance. It also engages students to work hard in order to reach their goals. It connected with flow theory that students might meet challenges during the process, but students can control the challenge. Students can handle it based on consistently working hard. After students “get it,” they get a sense of achievement and confidence enough to keep trying to do more.

Lisa’s memorable performance

I asked Lisa about any performance she felt was special or memorable, because I am trying to discover what kind of dance is memorable for my interviewee. From this kind of story, we learn about a dance teacher’s background, insights, and attitude toward dance. Her childhood experiences might influence her future teaching. The following is the performance she shared with me.

One time I remembered I really loved was a solo piece I did when I was 18, it was a lyrical dance¹. I can still remember the costume I wore, black pants and it was kind of fun, because the type of way it can opened up, so there were really like a big fan pants and black body suit. The movement with song I really loved and my

¹ Fusion of ballet and jazz

teacher choreographed it for me and I really liked her choreography. She did most of it. She gave me the movement mostly. I had few ideas, but at that time your dance teacher created the choreographer for you and you learned from that. Probably that was my favourite dance. It was at competition and recital, which is at the end of year it was the performance for the dance school that I belong to. I performed in a lot of places. I did a couple of dance competition and recital as well. The audience were parents and dance teachers from different dance studios. My parents, my sister, and my boyfriend were all there watching. I felt good and happy and excited to be on the stage. I was really in the moment. After the performance, I felt really excited.

From her story, we can see that Lisa enjoyed performing on stage and that it engaged her in dance. The sense of occasion, the work to prepare of the event, the anticipation and support from family and friends seemed to help to develop the sense of flow as Lisa said, “I was really in the moment.” She mentioned her teacher, family, and boyfriend were watching her performance, which clearly showed that family and social support are important in encouraging a dancer’s career and helping the make the performance important.. Moreover, music, costume, dance style, and creative movement were major factors in contributing to a memorable dance performance.

Lisa first teaching experience

She became a dance teacher when she was 15 after her family moved to a new town. She found a studio to take dance lessons. After the first classes, the studio owner offered her a job teaching ballet and jazz for the little children. She immediately took to this experience, enjoying the raw energy of the children. The owner noted her enthusiasm

and gave her more classes to teach. She prepared hard for the first class. Lisa was teaching a ballet movement which she describes below.

I can still remember because they were kids, I tried to get the kids to follow along. It was a tiny room I can remember that it was not a big dance studio and community centre. That was kind of challenging, I was 15, when I started [and] that was my first real job. I had a lot of parents wanting to watch and I did not want to them there. And my boss, the owner of the dance school, she said she did not encourage that either, because except one time in the month have a class, they can come and watch. That worked very well because I could prepare for it. And the kids I found to be better when their parents watched, which was interesting. I definitely felt nervous. But you can get past it, when you do it regularly.

This anecdote shows Lisa's sense of confidence as she learned to take control of the teaching space, direct parents when they could observe, as well as learning how to be prepared for the class. She learned how to organize the class as she learned to relate her dance ability to the needs of the students. She learned to prepare for performance so the students were used to committing to events and could feel a sense of achievement.

Shifting majors in university

Lisa was taking an education degree but in her second year she switched her major to dance study. After she graduated with a BA in dance she went back and got a BEd.

The program started in second year in University of Calgary, and I had always loved dancing. I thought this is what I want to do. It was perfect. The program was new, I did not know about it before I enrolled in university. My first year, I

learned of it in the dance degree program. I thought it was something I really like to do. So that what made me think maybe I could change my major and I had addition for the program, so I managed to get in.

She said that the occasion linked to her commitment to teaching dance because her background allowed her to be an elementary dance teacher. She taught elementary school in the regular program for a time and when she moved to Victoria she looked for a job.

This job came up. I thought it was perfect, because it combined my background in dance and education. It just kind of came to me. I was not necessarily looking for a job teaching dance, but I am really happy it happened.

Here we note how Lisa reflects on shifting her major. From her experience, we know she really loved to dance and to be a dance teacher. Following her passion to teach dance led to the opportunity in the Middle school where we have conducted this research study.

Lisa's experience about engagement in dance

Lisa was really motivated and engaged in dance, because she wanted to continue and get feedback. It was something she enjoyed and she just kept getting more and more involved. She was sort of teaching when she was a teenager. So that was motivating too because she had a paying job and she got a lot of work and really enjoyed working with children.

She told me a story about her engagement with dance when she was in university. She took a class in choreography and she had a strict teacher who pushed her to think beyond and create things beyond what she had done before, in order to explore the process and create movements. Lisa said, "The teacher challenged me a lot. She was very

good dancer and choreographer, but she really pushed us. So I was very committed put a lot of hours in to creating my choreography for that course.”

One thing Lisa did not like about her dance teacher in university was that she did not allowed Lisa to use music. She just had to dance, thinking the movements, because the teacher did not want to the music to influence how Lisa moved. But Lisa did not like it.

For me that was really challenging, because I have not really done that before and I did not really understand it. I still like to dance with music and I can understand why she wanted us to do that. I still remember that experience and I reflect on it when I am creating movement I guess. Because you think about creating movement not just to interpret the music, but moving based on natural impulses and just thinking the movement without being influenced by the music, so that can be interesting. You can kind of explore and be creative sometimes in a different way, when you do not use music. You create based on the exploration of the movement. You might start with moving, from that finger type, test you from your elbow, or with a certain emotion in mind, or certain character or something like that, so there were different ways to create movement, aside from the musical aspect of it.

This type of dance performance, without music, is more challenging, too difficult for beginner dances. However, Lisa did not use the same strategy as her dance teacher in teaching dance. She said:

I do try to get them to take it seriously and create something that's going to be good. Obviously this environment is a lot of different than the university class

environment in terms of choreography. I am very pleased with how motivated they are [the middle school students]. They create these dances together in a relatively short amount of time and they are generally engaged. It is really nice. Here we note how Lisa reflects on the way pedagogical strategies are often contextually framed. At the university the teacher does not use music in order to make students focus on creating the movements and expressing their insight and feelings without the influence of music. In contrast, Lisa uses music to help students have more ideas about how to do choreography. It showed that Lisa uses different strategies based on the students' level. She has a clear purpose in requiring different abilities and skills between professional dancers and middle school students.

Lisa and her three boys' story of doing dance

Lisa has three boys and they are all learning dance. They had just finished an eight-week hip-hop class at a recreation centre. She noted:

It was really fun and cute; they were enjoying it. It is interesting because the class I think it is 11 kids in the class and only two girls and the others are boys. I was quite surprised to see two, so, anyway, it is really popular.

When I heard there were more boys than girls in the dance class, I was surprised. Dance was always treated as a female activity and generally there were more females in dance class than males. I think that is why Lisa felt surprised. However, from this point onward, we can see hip-hop dance is becoming popular for boys. Lisa also told me that her boys liked dance and the process of learning was same. She said:

All my kids seemed to enjoy it pretty equally. Maybe one of my boys is a little bit shy. They did not perform on the stage, just did it the recreation centre class.

There is not a huge difference.

I asked Lisa if she wanted her children to learn ballet. Lisa said that she would like, but her children are six and “they already do not want to do ballet, because they think it is for girls, right?” Even though Lisa told them that they could do it, they were still not interested.

If they want to do it, I would totally encourage them to do it, but I am not going to push them. I am not going to say, “You have to take ballet,” when they are not really showing an interest. I am happy they are doing their hip-hop dancing and I think that is nice. I am not going to force them to take it.

I asked Lisa why her children thought ballet was not for boys. She said:

First of all, they get that ballet is not for boys from schools, other kids. Secondly, any images they have in ballet, there are very few images where you can find a man doing ballet. I mean there are some but, for example, Angelina Ballerina is a TV show. It is a little mouth, pink mouth, dress pink. It is very girly. All the images are reinforcing the stereotype, so I think it takes time. I do not know if you have seen Billy Elliot that movie, it is my favorite movie. My husband and I saw the musical and I want to my kids to see it, because I think it is a good story and shows why shouldn't boys do ballet?

It is interesting to note here that ballet is a girly activity in many people's mind. Even as a dance teacher, she cannot prevent her boys from believing the stereotype about dance.

The power of the media affects the public's appreciation of beauty and attitude toward

dance. Children can easily get this kind of stereotype from the public, peers, and other parents. This is a result of the impact of mainstream values.

The the next section I will offer my impressions of the school and the classes of students that were studied.

The School²

King George Middle School is a grade 6-8 school in British Columbia, Canada in a mid-sized city. The school offers music, fine arts, athletics, games, exercise, dance, and leisure activities. It also offers nutrition, healthy life choices, social responsibility, and several programs and clubs. There are about 35 teachers and staff. When I walked into the school, I found it was very clean, bright, open, and friendly.

The first day I went to the school, I was really impressed by the dance environment. There was a hallway near the dance studio with a bench. Students usually meet in the hallway and go to the studio together. As I opened the door I saw a room of about 500 square feet, with some chairs near the door. In a corner, there was a music machine and a TV on the wall. There was a desk for Lisa. A computer and some pens were on the desk. There was a big mirror on the wall. Above the mirror were some dance pictures. Opposite the mirror was a board for Lisa to write on or explain something to the students. Some pictures and writing on the wall were really interesting. For instance, “attitude + ability = success.” “Create.” “Be accepting, be caring, be compassionate, be honest, be respectful, be understanding, be you!”

² Information on school gained from the school website not shared here to project anonymity of those involved.

The two classes

I observed two classes in the school. One was grade six and one was grade eight in the February to April term. Both grades had a dance course once a week. Because of vacation and some school activities, grade eight had a total of seven lessons, while the grade six class had nine lessons.

In the grade six class were 27 students (13 males and 14 females) and in the grade eight class 30 students (16 males and 14 females). Only 11 students missed one or two classes in grade six. In grade eight, 15 students did not have a full attendance record. One student missed five classes; the other students missed only one or two classes. The majority of students from the two classes attended every lesson in the dance course.

The phases of the dance classes

The phases of the dance classes were separated into four parts including warm-up, cross, routine and choreography. In the warm-up the focus is to prepare the students to exercise with stretches and light activities designed to raise core body temperature to help students prepare themselves to dance and reduce the risk of injury.

In cross exercises students cross from one corner of the dance studio to another corner with movement. The movements usually created by themselves and related to a theme or task set by the teacher like exploring pathways or use of body parts.

In the routine part of a dance lesson the dance teacher leads the students in developing a sequence of movements that will create a routine that may be performed to music that offers a simple phrasing pattern to associate to the movements.

Choreography refers to the final phase of the lesson where students work in their own groups to create a dance together to then perform in front of their peers.

Student participants and their post-course reflections

The student participants volunteered. Eight girls in grade six volunteered to be interviewed; two girls in grade eight offered to be interviewed. However, none of the boys in grade six and grade eight volunteered to be interviewed; as a result, I randomly chose boys to be interviewed. I looked around and walked up to a friendly looking boy and asked if he would be willing to be interviewed. As a result, I got one boy in each class to be interviewed.

Table 2 describes the participants' key characteristics. The descriptions were separated into six categories, including: appearance, character and background, attitude to dance, experience with dance and why they were chosen to be interviewed. The reason for choosing these aspects was they were apparent to me as an observer and they offer the reader an opportunity to understand what might be considered a typical middle school dance class.

Table 2. Summary of Participants' Key Characteristics

| | Oliver (grade 6) | Alanna (grade 6) | Greg (grade 8) | Mindy (grade 8) |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Appearance | Short and overweight. | Tall and strong. | Tall and strong. | Tall and slim. |
| Characters and background | Active, always smiling; open. Keen on responding to the teacher and sharing ideas. Had never done a dance course. | Passionate about the course. Keen on dance and active in the dance course. | Sporty and does sport outside school: football, basketball. He had no dance experience. | Really shy, and shy to perform in front of anyone; she saves her ideas. |
| Attitude to dance | Felt humiliated; disliked dancing; negative before the course. Afterward he started to like choreography and dancers. Looks forward to next year. | Loved dance since she was little. | Likes hip-hop, but had no dance experience before the course. | Not really keen on dance. |
| Experience with dance | Has not taken any dance classes. | She did a lot of jazz and hip-hop courses outside school since she was three years old. | Has not taken any dance classes. | Some dance experience from 5 to 8, then stopped because she was busy. Did hip-hop, jazz, ballet; her favourite: jazz. |
| Position class set-up | In side of 2nd or 3rd line | In the centre of 1st line | Final line | In the side of 2nd or 3rd line |
| Why choose them as an interviewee? | Active and likes to answer questions. | Volunteered | Responsible in the class and open. | Volunteered once I approached them, seemed friendly. |

Oliver (Grade 6)

Oliver is an active boy but a bit overweight. He is always smiling and open. He is keen to respond to the teacher and share ideas. He has never had a dance course before

and does not have any idea about dance. He told me after the dance course that it was definitely fun, as follows:

I am always very cautious whenever I am dancing, because I am not usually the best dancer. I am never been huge in dancing, never really said, “Let us dance now.” Usually I cannot really dance. I do not know any dances. So the dance course will probably help me a lot later on with that. When I am dancing, it is more like satisfied, like “Yeah, I got this.” I start a little shaky, like “Let us do this.” I was really nervous when we were walking up on stage. I have performed before, like for presentations, but not dancing.

He told me this dance course was the first time he actually did dance in school and in front of all his classmates; before, he just sat on the sidelines and listened to the music.

He said:

We went to bible camp and had a chapel session before that. They turn on some music and we all dance. I and a couple of kids did not dance. We just sat on the sidelines and listened to the music.

From his experience, I know he was not interested in dance. He was shy and did not want to express himself in front of others. He also commented that at his previous school he had never danced. He noted:

In grade five, usually at the end of week, we would have a dance party and I just sat on my desk because I did not really like dancing. I always feel I humiliate myself when I am around dancing.

After the dance course, he said, “Now I am looking forward to next year.”

Alanna (Grade 6)

She is tall, strong and passionate about dance. She was excited to do the dance course. She told me she had a fun time doing the choreography with her friends. Because she usually does not get a chance to make up dances with her friends, she felt it was fun. She had done a lot of jazz and hip-hop courses outside of school since she was three years old. She explained:

I just like to express myself through dance, and when I get to teach people, it is fun. I have done dance since I was three, so it is kind of like my whole life. Before I took it [dance], I felt really excited. I like to dance. When I dance, it is like no one is there, just me. I can just, like, take away everything that is happening with reality and just be the dance.

Because she learned a lot of dance outside of school, she had many dance experiences that she was teaching her peers during the dance course. I asked her how she liked dance after completing the course. She told me she still liked dance and she thinks the course gave her a chance to help and teach her peers “dance and stuff.” She said, “It is nice to dance and it made me feel good. I taught them hip-hop and stuff. I also taught them to do some, like, kick and cross forward and stuff, and they, like, did some.”

Greg (Grade 8)

Greg is tall and strong. He plays a lot of sport and is a leader in sport at the school. He plays a lot of sport outside of school including football and basketball, but not dance. He told me the dance course was fun:

I am planning now on taking dance in high school too, so it is kind of cool to have some sort of thing to go off. It was pretty fun. It is nice to hang out with the music

and kind of making your own stuff. It is cool to have a teacher here; it is also cool to be able to make a routine together. I did not take any dance classes before this one, as I play a lot of sports, so I do not have extra time to do other activities.

He told me that he was not super “into” dance, but he loved listening to music and loved having rhythm, so dance is always interesting to him, but he never really knew exactly what it was or how to think about it. After the dance course, he said he fell in love with dance:

I love dance. It is definitely suited for boys. It is a really inspirational part of dance that makes it good for anyone. It helped me decide to take dance in high school, because I was not really sure. My older brother took dance and he said it was really fun, but I was not sure whether to or not. After doing the course, it helped me to choose dance for high school.

He also told me that his memorable activity was doing the choreography and the cross exercise. He said:

It was my first time being in a dance class. It was interesting to learn how certain like dance courses warm-up compared to sports stuff. Making the choreography was fun, because I had never done that before, so that is pretty interesting.

It is apparent that Greg enjoyed the dance class and was keen on the choreography aspect. The course content was open so that students could add their personal style in dance.

Mindy (Grade 8)

She is really shy. She had a little dance experience from five to eight years old, then stopped because she became too busy. She did hip-hop, jazz and ballet, but her favourite is jazz. She was shy to perform in front of anyone, and afraid to talk about

her ideas. She told me this year she felt better about it and became open, because she found a group of good friends that she thought she could rely on and they were open to things. She said that before the dance course she was nervous and felt that she did not really fit in.

I do not think I was really good at dancing. I did not consider myself good at dancing at all and I did not have confidence at dancing. I kinda of stepped back.

That is why I was nervous to share my ideas about how I would dance. Because I am afraid everyone would laugh and stuff like that.

She told me she does not particularly like dance, but it definitely made her think about it more.

After doing dance course, I started to build confidence. It is not like I want to do dance classes now, but I had more appreciation for it than before.

She felt she benefited greatly from having the opportunity to learn more about dance, engage in group activities, and learn new routines that were fun. She explained:

I think particularly this year, making the dance was fun, because everyone engaged in it, so everyone kind of participated in it. We all did parts and everyone just followed along and we got things done. And then also I liked when we did the whole class together, did class routine together, so I think that is really fun too. That made me feel confident as well. I like being with my classmates and I like my classmates this year. It is so nice to see them dance too. We can just all be a group together and as individuals in little groups. I think it is also fun because everyone was taking part in it and everyone was just making different parts of it,

so we got more work done. It was just fun for choosing music and just practicing together in general.

From her experience and insight, we understand she was little bit shy and did not have confidence in dance. Neither did she like to express herself in public. Choreography in a teamwork situation was a very effective way to solve these issues for this student. It also developed her social experiences and cooperation with peers. During the creative dance process, peer support and shared engagement helps students build confidence and involves them in dance.

As we can infer from the students' comments during the post-course interview, there seemed to be a uniform appreciation of and joy for learning to dance. So what did Lisa do in her teaching practice to make this happen?

Steps in Lisa's Lessons (purposeful pedagogy over the term)

The table showed what teaching dance in one local middle school looked like. Dance lessons separated into four parts, which including beginning term, middle term, final term, as well as final performance on the last day of class. From this table, we can see the process of teaching content, which goes from easy to complex.

Table 3. Outline of Grade 6 and 8 Classes

| Course | Period | Course process | Purpose |
|---------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Grade 6 | Beginning 2.11 2.18. 2.25 | Basic movement through warm-up, cross and routine. | Introduce dance that gives students an understanding of basic dance movements. |
| | Middle 3.04 3.25 4.01 | Adding challenging movements and engaging students to create movements during the cross part. | Improved students' dance experience and made them think about dance movements independently. |
| | Ending 4.08 4.15 | Creating dance with their peers. | Let students create dance based on their styles and ideas and allowed students to work together as a group, in order to improve their social skills. |
| | Performance 4.22 | Showing the dance choreography group project. | Increased students' confidence by showing their dance and ideas in front of their peers. |
| Grade 8 | Beginning 2.06 2.13 | Basic movement through warm-up, cross and routine. | Introduced dance, which gave students an idea of basic dance movements. |
| | Middle 3.06 3.27 | Adding challenging movements and engaging students in creating movements during the cross part. | Improved students' dance experience and made them think about dance movements independently. |
| | Ending 4.10 4.17 | Creating dance with their peers. | Let students create dance based on their styles and ideas and allowing them to work together as a group, in order to improving their social skills. |
| | Performance 4.24 | Showing the dance choreography group project. | Increased students' confidence by showing their dance and ideas in front of their peers. |

The following tables illustrate each class schedule. They indicate when students get into the class, when they do each activity, and how long it took.

Table 4. Grade 6 class Schedule

| | 2.11 | 2.18 | 2.25 | 3.04 | 3.25 | 4.01 | 4.08 | 4.15 | 4.22 |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 11:15 | Gather in the hall | Gather in the hall | Gather in the hall, check attendance | Attendance check | Gather in the hall | Attendance check | Attendance check | Attendance check | Attendance check |
| 11:20 | Introduce the course | Attendance check | Warm-up | Warm-up | Attendance check | | Warm-up | Warm-up | Prepare and practice choreography |
| 11:25 | | Warm-up | | | Warm-up | Warm-up | Cross | | |
| 11:30 | Warm-up | | | | | | | Dance choreography | |
| 11:35 | | | | Cross | Cross | | Routine | | Performance |
| 11:40 | Cross | Cross | Cross | | | Dance choreography | Dance choreography | | |
| 11:45 | | Hip-hop walk | | | | | | | |
| 11:50 | Routine | Routine | Routine | Routine | Routine | | | | |
| 11:55 | | | | | Introduce dance choreography group project | | | | |
| 11:57 | | | | | | | | | |

Table 5. Grade 8 (Class schedule)

| | 2.06 | 2.13 | 3.06 | 3.27 | 4.10 | 4.17 | 4.24 |
|-------|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 11:15 | Gather in the hall | Introduce library course | Attendance check | Attendance check | Attendance check | Attendance check | Attendance check |
| 11:20 | Introduce the course | | | | Warm-up | | Prepare and practice choreography |
| 11:25 | | Game: "master, master who am I" | Warm- up | Introduce dance choreography group project | | Dance choreography | |
| 11:30 | Attendance check | | | Warm- up | | | |
| 11:35 | Warm- up | | Cross | | Dance choreography | | Performance |
| 11:40 | Cross | | Chasse | Dance choreography | | | |
| 11:45 | | Game: Frozen | Routine | | | | |
| 11:50 | Routine | | | | | | |
| 11:55 | | | | | | | |
| 11:57 | | | | | | | |

From the two charts, we can see the time allocation for each lesson. The attendance check took five to ten minutes. Warm-up was five to ten minutes. Crosses were five to ten minutes. Routine was about ten minutes. After the middle term, the time of warm-up, cross, and routine were decreasing and shifting to dance choreography, which took about twenty minutes. The teacher led the attendance check, warm-up, and routine. The students self-directed the cross and dance choreography, working in groups.

Here we can see how Lisa managed the class and time allocation in each activity. It showed that Lisa used part of the time to guide activities herself at the beginning of

class; however, she offered an opportunity for students to self-direct practicing in the second part of the class.

Lisa's Strategies in the Teaching Process

In this session, I will introduce how Lisa uses different strategies to engage both girls and boys in dance class. It is separated into five parts including purposeful pedagogy, creating trust, within and between groups, creative instruction, quality movement, shy kids and nervous resistance.

Purposeful pedagogy

a) Music

Lisa believed that most people enjoy the feeling of moving their body. She said:

Sometimes is hard to get students involved, but by putting on students' favourite music, students would be moving their body and just feel good naturally. I think there is allowing them to dance with music they like and dance with their friends and engaging them in creating some of their own movements, so having a balance between teaching them something and also letting them come up with their own, being creative.

Lisa was trying to use good music that they liked. She asked students to tell her the songs they liked to dance to. She stated: "I try as long as appropriate, I try to put that song as warm-up and cross routine. So they can dance with the music they like."

b) Encouraging students to follow their interests

Lisa engaged students by knowing their interests. She was trying to offer a fun environment to students.

I do my best to try to make it fun. There are some kids they are not really involved in class; they tell you they do not want to dance and they do not like dancing.

There is only so much I can do, but I do try to put on the music they like to dance to and something they are familiar with and enjoy. I try to ask them what they like and or sometimes even bring in, kids might really interested in basketball, so saying OK we will do some basketball movement and make it a kind of dance. So trying to tie other interests for them.

She told me another example of students' engagement. Some children were really engaged and asked Lisa to help them create the dance.

The kids are coming up with the talent show. So they are engaged and spend a lot of time practicing and creating. And they have asked me for help with their choreography. They are really engaged and nobody is telling them to do that, but they want to. The support from teachers helps that to happen, so you are giving them space to practice and time to hold the talent show, to encourage them and give them practice time, helping them with creating, and refining their pieces.

c) Suggestions

Lisa walked around between each group when students were doing their choreography. She gave them suggestions that they could do in the dance. For example, one day, she saw a group of boys practicing by the door. They had choreographed some moves, but they were stuck. So she gave them suggestions, as follows:

They can do "canon" i.e., one person moves, another does not move, and another and another, so it is like a domino effect – that was one suggestion. Or doing some kind of "lift" so they were working together to lift one or other of the dancers, or

some kind of big jump or something like that. Giving them some suggestions that they could incorporate, because sometimes they do get stuck on that. I want to them come up with the movement as much as possible on their own, but sometimes they just need a few hints or suggestions to get them going again.

d) Feedback

The feedback in Lisa's class accounted for a significant proportion of her work.

Lisa was giving feedback to students in diverse activities, which included:

- Warm-up, cross, routine (awesome, great, good work)
- Choreography
- Performance in last class (oral and paper)

For example, one group of boys was watching a video and mimicking it. They were really concentrating and working hard. Lisa said, "I want to take a picture, it is exactly what I want to see—you guys are very focused and made a very good start." Another example was what Lisa said to those boys who were practicing: "You guys are doing so well today; the beginning is awesome. It looks great and keep practicing." Lisa said:

I guess the other big part is the reflection on what they are doing, so giving them feedback and a lot of verbal feedback, a lot of encouragement, also some formal feedback like joining with the group for helping them to understand what an excellent project looks like, what a very good project, what is satisfactory, what needs to improve, so that kind of feedback is part of the process of the whole learning experience as well. The key point is the assessment and creation and revolving process that constantly creates something and you take it back and look

at it. What I would change and what do I like and what works well and what was not working so well, what can I do differently next time?

For instance, when students were creating their dance, Lisa would go around to each group. She always gave some ideas and suggestions about the choreography, for example, feet together, reach up over. She was always asking them: “Can I see you guys beginning?” “My favourite part is...” Lisa noted:


I am constantly walking around, see where they creating, where they adding to see what they add process. Getting some done first of all, and then having them share with me and each group. I would several times say, “OK, I love your beginning, that is a very strong beginning, but you need to fill out the rest, you need to create more,” so that is the example I say a lot.

For some students who did not have a clear start she said, “You need to have a strong post at the beginning you hold, and then start to move, so we know you have started. So it is clearly the beginning of your dance.”

Those kinds of things—giving them a little bit of feedback all the time all the way through it and encouraging them. Another example, sometimes they come to me and say, “We are stuck. We do not know what to do. We cannot think of any movements.” So I will give them suggestions like: “Why do not you try maybe doing a left, working together to create a left?” Or sometimes I give them suggestions for little bit of choreography that we have done in the class. So it is kind of ongoing things that process of creation, feedback and holding it to get something that they can perform.

e) Assess students’ learning

Lisa told me she assessed learning based on how well students participated and how much effort they put in. In Figure 3 is a copy of the dance assessment that Lisa uses to rate students.



Gordon Head Middle School Dance/Drama Exploratory Assessment
 Dance/Drama Teacher: Mrs. L. Knapp
 Student: _____

Feedback Scale: 1=rarely 2=sometimes 3=usually 4=always

The student has demonstrated **responsibility** and **respect** for self and others by:

1. Practicing safe classroom procedures
1 2 3 4
2. Participating positively in class activities and performances
1 2 3 4
3. Supporting classmates during group work and by being a respectful audience member
1 2 3 4
4. Working cooperatively with others
1 2 3 4
5. Working cooperatively with dance/drama teacher
1 2 3 4

| S=Satisfactory achievement | G=Good achievement | E=Excellent achievement |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Working to develop knowledge of basic dance steps | S | G E |
| 2. Creating/performing choreography | S | G E |
| 3. Demonstrating teamwork in class presentations | S | G E |
| 4. Demonstrating willingness to participate in new activities | S | G E |
| 5. Demonstrating improvement of dance/drama skills | S | G E |




Figure 3 Student Assessment Form

As Lisa stated,

I use this scale where I look at how well they participated in class time, how positive their attitudes were toward what we were doing in class where there is dance, learning dance steps or in drama, performance in drama, so that is how I come up with the assessment. Basically, using this rule break for the dance project and then also thinking about that as the overall picture of the child as what they

were doing in the classes when they come each day. So it is kind of just looking at how they behave and approach their learning throughout the whole eight weeks. The assessment system Lisa used was focusing on students' own improvement during the classes. Lisa was not compare dance skills between students, but assessed students based on their personal efforts, behaviors, improvement, concentration and group cooperation. Thus, students can get good scores, if they work hard and have good behave in dance class. They do not need to compete with their peers, all they need was concentrated their own achievement and improvement which not only can engage students to work hard and get involved in the class, but also make students to more enjoy the process of dance. From Lisa's assessment method, we can note that Lisa was always focusing on students self improvement rather than compare which students is the best dancer. She was trying to develop students interest in dance and make an enjoyable, positive and relax atmosphere in dance class, in order to make every students enjoy dance class.

Creating trust

Lisa was trying to offer a good learning environment to allow students to enjoy dance. She set up an environment of trust and talked to the children about making a safe space, so that everybody could get up and perform. When students do their project, Lisa helps them if they need ideas for movement or music.

So I always talk to the kids at the first class about that, make sure we are kind to each other, a supportive audience, because it does take a lot of courage to do that.

So talking that out seems to help.

She allowed them to be in groups, so nobody had to dance by himself or herself. She said, "There are a couple of friends with them and that seems to help a lot. Sometimes, I

modify how much they have to do, so they can just do a little bit.” This idea of modifying based on students needs speaks to a sense of differentiation in Lisa’s instruction.

a) Help in project

Lisa was so busy in the class. She told students they could be in or out of the studio to create their own dance. So Lisa walked around to keep checking on their practice process. She wanted to check all groups to make sure they were involved. She helped students who were in the studio to play the music and watched their created dance and gave them feedback. Then, she went out of the studio and found other groups and checked their progress to make sure the students did not have any trouble in creating dance. She told me: “In the practicing part, every group can find a place to practice, it does not matter whether it is in the class or outside of the classroom. They only need to be close to the classroom so that I can easily find them.” Again, this freedom to practice shows how Lisa has nurtured a sense of trust with her students.

For instance, Gary, Calvin, and Vadin had some problems choosing music. They asked for Lisa’s help. Lisa asked them questions such as: “What style do you want to do?” and “What artist or song do you like?” Then Lisa started to play some music to match their interests. Finally, they chose “Imagine Dragons’ Demons” as their music. She told me she was so impressed when she had a memorable group of girls in grade eight:

In grade eight, the group of girls did “Albatroz” by Mini, Belle, Nancy, Nina and Olia. It was memorable for me working with them, seeing them, working together. They really worked hard. They were always focused on what they were doing, and they didn’t need very much input from me. You know, I just sort of watched

them working together because they were so good at coming up with choreography and practicing it and being dedicated to it. Then watching their performance again was memorable because they did a great performance that was very well timed, very nicely put together, so that was really fun.

This example showed that Lisa enjoyed working with students, helped students creating dance project and communicated with them. She appreciated students performance and good at discovering their strengths and praised them. Encouraging students to keep practicing, trying to do their best, giving students choreography suggestion were the main pedagogy as Lisa help students within project.

b) Encourage students working in a group

As Lisa said, “I always let them do group things. Group things work very well. They like to create things in small groups and are pretty engaged in that piece.” Lisa was always engaging students to practice with their peers in order to create a group environment. For example, there was a student, called Neil, who was not involved in class. Lisa was trying to keep him engaged with a group of friends and working together. He finally got involved with a group and worked better. Lisa keep encouraging students to take part as much as possible.

Sometimes, if students had trouble working with a group, she liked to fix it. Once, in grade eight, Gary, Calvin, and Alan had some problems with group work. No students invited them to join their groups. Calvin told the teacher that he could not work with Alan. As a result, Lisa decided to talk with other groups to see whether any group would let them in. First, Lisa put Gary and Calvin and another boy in one group. After that, Lisa asked a girls’ group why they did not want to have others in their group and said their

movements were really girlish. This idea of girlish speaks to the issues raised earlier where “girl” type movements are seen as a negative perpetuating a negative stance to girl actions that has no real fixed meaning other than a put down.

Getting the “No” answer perplexed Lisa, rather than challenging this situation she asked a boy’s group if they could have Alan in their group. They seemed really unhappy but they agreed Alan could join. “Thank you guys for being open!” Lisa said.

Lisa went back to the dance studio and told Alan that he could be in that boys’ group, but Alan did not want to work with them. Again Lisa decided not to push the situation but instead asked Alan who he could work with. He said, “Can I work with Parker’s group?” Then Lisa asked Parker’s group, they said “Yes,” so Alan joined in. He looked so happy and followed the other students’ movements seriously. This example of dealing with a difficult student speaks to Lisa trying to negotiate with the adolescent students to find a solution. Though the “no” answer was disappointing, Lisa’s decision not to push the issue resulted in a group stepping forward to include the challenging student, who then was able to succeed.

c) Mixed gender

Lisa tried to mix gender when students did the routine. She separated four groups based on numbers. She gave every student a number. At the end, students who got number one stood in the first line, students who got number two stood in the second line and so on. This method meant that every group had both boys and girls. This strategy prevented a popularity contest with students selecting partners and rejecting others. Apart from the example above with Alan this generally worked well.

Within and between groups

In order to engage students, Lisa gives students a project to come up with their own dance so that students get to be in a small group. She broke the numbers down into smaller groups and then students performed to smaller audience groups for feedback.

I like to separate the class into smaller groups, so they are not in front of the whole class. If it is just a smaller group of kids it seems less intimidating. What I am trying to do by giving them characters and doing some partner work that is fun, like lifting, doing some big movement like that; they seem to enjoy that. I am trying to come to cross and trying to get them engaged.

Creative instruction

Lisa wanted to ensure students have time to create their own dance, instead of just sitting and listening to Lisa teaching. She said:

I believe that the good learning happening in there meant they were involved in the process for themselves as much as possible. It is the same approach I would take to teaching a math lesson. It is pretty much the same underlying principle. You have some direct teaching, that is important too, but as much as possible getting in there and doing it themselves and doing group work as well, working together as a team to create something.

Lisa gave an example from the choreography project last term. A group of boys in grade seven were not engaged in class in the dance part, but when they came to the final choreography project, they were very much engaged. They created a rap. They asked Lisa if they could make up a rap and Lisa agreed. But Lisa asked them to do movement with that as well, because it is dance class. The students agreed and did a great job.

They practiced really hard and they worked really focused each class, the practice class, until the performance. They all knew it very well and their movement was good and they picked good music in the background, so that is the example. When they are working on something that they feel belongs to them, as personal things, doing something interesting to them, they are generally engaged. It should find a way in there.

Again, here we can note how Lisa tries to find things in students' lives that they value as a vehicle to get them to engage in dance. Her openness to students' ideas, if adapted to the needs of the class, helps students to feel a sense of ownership for the dances they created.

Encouraging quality movement

Using direct instruction Lisa indicated she liked to show students how to do different dance steps as well as allow them to explore steps they could use. As she stated, "I like to do a lot of direct instruction to the course in teaching them dance steps and teaching them instruction for games in drama."

However, to avoid this direct instruction seemingly imposed she would find out which dances styles the students liked. As she stated, "I ask them beginning and give them a short questionnaire asking them what dance style they might want to try." This way she then showed the students dance steps related to the dance styles they liked. In addition, Lisa would increase the dance background knowledge for students explaining where the dance styles came from. In this way Lisa to arranged different movements and dance steps for the students in order to enhance their dance knowledge and experience.

She also encouraged some students who had a dance background to allow them to share their experiences with the class, showing the steps they were learning.

In all these strategies Lisa was looking to making a balance between what students know and can do and what is quality dance steps. She was continuously looking for a suitable level for the students. Lisa thinks that teaching students at their level is important. As she said,

To make sure students can do it is not too difficult, because it can turn them off quickly. Try to keep it simple enough so that they can do it. Finding a balance where they are at, not too much below their level, but also not too challenging.

In order to find a balance in the challenge, Lisa used basic movements that can be difficult and she gave that option to students who are at the higher level. Lisa said:

For example, if you are doing a simple turn, it would be called a pencil turn, so I usually say it is the basic, I want to everybody try a pencil turn, and if you got that, then you could do a “pirouette” turn on one foot. If you got that, you could do a double “pirouette” spinning twice on your foot. So that is the example to modify the same movements in three ways for different levels. When it comes to time to do their own choreography project that was really individual. Because they are going to create movement at their level, it is their own personal project.

Addressing shy, nervous and resistant students

Lisa thought boys and girls both like to dance, but as they get older, they get shyer or more self-conscious about dancing in front of their peers. It can be hard to get over.

Also, there is still the stereotype that dance is more for girls than for boys. “It is silly, it

does not make sense, but it does exist, so it is something we keep working on to try to get rid of that.”

a) Removing the “girly” attitude from class

Some boys are not interested in dance, because of the “girly” attitude in class.

Lisa was trying to remove it.

They do not want to do something for girls. They do not want to make fun of others. I think it really comes down to a lot of kids. I heard boys say things like: that is girly, that movement is girly, I do not want to do that.

Lisa sometimes asks why they do not like dance. Students usually say, “I am not good at it,” or “I do not know how to dance.” Lisa told me an example in her class about boys avoiding dancing.

A lot of times they come to class and ask, “Do we have to dance? I do not want to dance today. I am not good at dancing. They got that a lot of times. Because it is not their passion, I just to say try it and have fun, do the best you can. Try some movements. Even if you do not feel good at it, it does not matter, girls do that too, it is not just boys who complain. Most kids do not take dance outside dance lessons; most of them are pretty shy.

Lisa was trying to encourage some shy or nervous students to become involved in dance. She told me most classes had some students who feel shy about dancing.

Earlier this year, a group of boys did not want to do any cross floor movements. They would not even cross the floor to the music in front of other kids; they were very shy about that. I encouraged them to try and I sometimes just let them watch and gradually by the end, they were joining in with other groups, so I try to pick

music and ask what sounds they like to dance to and tried to encourage them to do that.

Shyness does not only occur in boys, but also in girls. In grade six, Lisa remembered some girls who said: “I feel like I can’t do it. I am too shy. I don’t want to do the dance.” She explained,

They ended up participating and that was memorable for me. It was a memorable event watching them do that. They got involved so that was something really memorable. And then, of course, what I said about Neil, thinking about resistance that he was resistant and not wanting to do the dance. It was difficult to get him involved in the group. I kept talking to him and working with him and talking to his group members and they were very good about wanting to help get him involved. So it was a very memorable event for me to see him actually performing with them and that we actually got him to that point.

Another example was a girl called Karen. She was very shy and not willing to dance in front of her peers. She talked about it with Lisa in a small voice, two hands held together in front of her body. Lisa really understood Karen’s feeling. She said, “If you do not want to perform in front of other students, you can do it for me after class. But can I give you some suggestions? Just keep practicing; once you learn it, you will like it.”

She said OK, but did not perform, she just watched her peers practicing. Next class, she came and told Lisa again about not being willing to perform in front of her peers. Lisa said, “Nobody is looking at you; they are all doing their own thing.” However, Karen still did not want to do it. After that, four girls were dancing in front of Lisa and one girl asked Karen help her to do a bridge and Karen did. Afterwards, Lisa said, “That

was excellent, you are doing great! Could you do more movements?” She agreed, and danced the whole routine. Lisa was so happy about that. She told me that “sometimes you need to be patient, and keep engaging them to try, but do not push them too much. If you push too much, they might be scared and stop doing anything.” I asked Lisa why Karen had changed her mind and started to join in. Lisa said, “I do not know. It is personal things, maybe she saw her peers do it, and she thought she could do it, so she tried. Anyway, I am so happy!” This account really highlights how important it was to Lisa for students to let go of their inhibitions, to embrace the opportunity to dance.

Gina, a shy girl in grade six, was a really good dancer and she joined Lisa’s dance club. She told Lisa that she did not want to perform in front of her peers. Lisa said:

You are a good dancer. I know sometimes, people just feel they do not have the confidence to do that. Do not worry; you can do it. I do not want to push you guys.

Next class, Gina told Lisa again about not being willing to perform. Lisa asked why. Gina said she felt uncomfortable dancing in front of the class. Lisa said, “You can practice in lunch time and not show it to the whole class.” But, in the final performance, she did the performance in front of her peers. Lisa was so appreciative of that.

Lisa thought the reason why girls avoid dance is they do not want to be looked at and they do not want to attract attention. Even though some girls are quite good dancers, they do not want to dance because they are shy. Lisa believed another fact was that it is hard to be a teenager. Some girls are fear being judged and being looked at during their teenager time. They are afraid to become the focus of attention and attempt to be normal and as same as other peers. They are also sensitive and care about peers thinking about themselves that makes them not want to show themselves.

Lisa does not think males dislike dancing. She thinks that boys like dance as much as girls do. Boys can also get engaged in dance. They really have fun and enjoy it, but it is a stigma and stereotype for both boys and girls, which means that boys avoid dance outside of school. Lisa's insights represent the phenomenon in dance education. Outside factors, such as social, school and parents have the stereotype for both boys and girls which influenced them to choose hobby and attitude of dance. The stigma and stereotype force boys and girls to choose activity based on the social attitude and expectation of gender instead of students personal favorite.

Lisa had many solutions for the shy students. For example, for the group of girls in grade six, two of them told Lisa they did not want to perform in front of their class because they felt embarrassed. Lisa asked them to dance only for her in order to decrease pressure for them.

I told them to do the performance in front of me. Taking away some of the pressure and making it a little bit safer for them to feel more comfortable, they usually do it, that helps; that is one thing.

b) Confidence is a word Lisa likes to talk about in the teaching process.

Another thing I was really pleased about was for grade six the two girls were really struggling with their lack of confidence. They were not feeling confident about performing in front of the class with their group. I spent a lot of time watching their group choreography but then something was a turning point, because they both agreed to perform and they did a great job. So that was really exciting for me to see them getting there and being able to do it. On the last day of the performance, they were missing two people, but they adapted their dance, and

did a good job. One was the girl who felt shy. She said, “I cannot do this [because] my partner is not here.” But they mixed it. They made it work although the girl was away.

The example noted that students could overcome fears and shyness by engagement. Lisa did an excellent job to nurture students’ confidence in the performance. She spend time to watch students’ practicing, giving them idea of choreography which made them having a better job in the performance as well as increased their confidence. In addition, not pushing students, but keep encourage students to practice, give positive feedback are effective methods to engagement students performing in front of class. Thus students can have a free and relax environment to learn and enjoy dance. In contrast, if pushing students to practice, students would feel pressure and lose fun and interest in dance.

This idea of shyness is evidence in the volunteers to be interviewed. Table 5 illustrates the volunteers who were willing to be interviewed in both grade six and eight classes. It is interesting to note here that no boys were willing to be interviewed. The number of girl volunteers decreased as they reached higher grades, which went from eight in grade six to two in grade eight. It showed boys did not want to express themselves as much as girls.

At the same time, the girls became shy as they got older.

Table 6. The Volunteers to be Interviewed

| | Grade 6 | | Grade 8 | |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | boys | girls | boys | girls |
| Number of students | 13 | 14 | 15 | 12 |
| Volunteer to be interviewed | 0 | 8 | 0 | 2 |

Being shy and nervous are characteristics of teenagers. They reach a sensitive age with strong concerns and they worry about others' comments. It prevents them from expressing themselves. However, Lisa said those students started liking dance in the end. Although it was not a huge change, they were participating more than at the beginning.

A special case: Exceptional Student whose challenges were beyond shyness

Merriam (1988) indicated that a case study which focused on “discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p. 3). A case study “concentrates attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. They are problem-centred, small-scale, entrepreneurial endeavours” (Shaw, 1978, p. 2). In this section I used case study of one particular student because from my observation, I found that Neil, a boy from grade six, was a special student. He improved a lot from the beginning when he was not interested in dance, in fact he sat out of lessons because he had a special education designation. By the end he was participating and cooperating with his group and doing a good performance. Lisa's pedagogy played an important part in Neil's changing attitude.

Neil was very easy distracted and had ADHD, low incidence confrontation. He did not like to follow the teacher's movements and talked with other students or sat on the last line.

On February 18th, he stood behind the door and the Lisa talked with him. But Neil did not want to be involved in the class. Lisa explained that Neil did not understand engagement and she realized that, but she did not want to push him. “I was trying to talk

with Neil. He said, Leave me alone.’’ However, Lisa was trying to get him involved in the class. Lisa let Neil control the music so that Neil seemed to join the class.

On February 25th, before the class, Lisa told me last Wednesday afternoon was a drama course. Lisa had to teach Neil in the drama course. She told me:

Neil wanted to play several roles, but I said everyone should choose only one role to play. Neil was very unhappy and mad. He hit me and ran out of class. I think he cannot do this to me. It was too rude. I talked with his teacher after class. Lisa said Neil has the same behavior in other classes. He always runs out of class and his emotions change so quickly and [he becomes] mad easily. I feel little bit worried about today’s class. We will see what happens.

When we go out to the lobby, where teacher and students meet first before going into the dance room, Neil was there and playing with his iPad. I tried to talk with him. He looks happy today, so I asked him some questions. From this exchange I learned that Neil was keen on playing the iPad game and he did not like dance class, which was boring for him. The question this raised is how is a student like Neil to be successful in school or even in this dance class?

On March 25th, everyone started to follow Lisa in the warm-up, except for Neil. He lay on the ground. When they were turning, a boy accidentally kicked Neil’s legs. Neil held his legs and seemed hurt. Lisa came and asked how he felt. Neil pointed to the boy who kicked his legs and said, ‘‘Go away. Leave me alone. It is his fault. He knew I was lying on the ground, but he still kicked me.’’ Lisa told Neil, ‘‘You should go to the side. It is dangerous, if you are lying on the centre.’’ Neil said, ‘‘I do not want to go to the side, you go away.’’ ‘‘Be polite, Neil. I will give you two seconds and then you go to the

corner by yourself, OK?” After that, Lisa taught the movements again. At the end of class, Lisa told me: “Neil always gets mad quickly, frustrated. He is so rude to me. He cannot treat me like this, right? He is very difficult.”

On April 1st, Lisa asked the students to work on their dance choreography project with their groups. Neil came and sat on a chair and played on his iPad. He looked angry and told Lisa that a boy who was with him in one group was so annoying that he did not want to be in the group. Lisa asked the boys to come up and asked what had happened. The boy said they were trying to create dance, but Neil did not like the actions they created. So he had said some bad words to Neil. Lisa asked the boy, “What do you want to say to Neil?” Then the boy came to Neil and said, “Neil, sorry, maybe I said something wrong, but we want everything to work.” After that, Lisa took Neil back to his group and Neil watched his group dance, instead of playing on the iPad.

From Neil’s general behaviour, I was worried about his final performance. On April 8th, Lisa watched Neil’s group practice and Neil did a shoulder stand. After class, Lisa found Neil and told him: “You are doing very well today. I am surprised you can do that, so keep practicing, OK?” Neil looked happy when Lisa encouraged him and nodded his head.

On April 22nd, it was the last day of the dance course and the grade six students did their performance. Neil’s group did a dance called “Do the John Wall.” There were five boys: Neil, Joe, Stan, Cade, and Ray. They did a really good job and Neil showed a lot of improvement. He did the dance, he flowed with the group and got fully involved. When he did the shoulder stand, some students clapped him. He looked so engaged and really enjoyed his special moment. Lisa was so surprised about their performance and

said: “Nice organized intro. Good energy! Nice choreography on chorus! Great solos! Loved the shoulder stand! Fun tricks! Great lift off, Neil. Great teamwork guys! Watch the spacing on the ending.”

After the course was over, I interviewed Lisa about Neil. This is what she said: I guess the challenge is with that student (Neil). I have to talk with him and get him to figure out problems of basically how to get him back involved with this group. One time, he had an argument with his group and he felt out [of it] for some reason. They were frustrated with him because he was not participating well and he was distracted, so he sat out on the bench; he took the basketball away from one of the other kids’ groups. I just remember talking through that with him and he was really resistant and not very happy. But after talking with him and giving him a little bit of space, he calmed down. He ended up going back to his group. That is the challenge, but it was OK in the end.

Neil had a big improvement from not participating in class to performing a critical part of his groups’ dance, his “shoulder stand” movement. I think Neil’ s improvement was connected closely with Lisa’s pedagogy that she did not give up on students. Lisa always encourages students to be involved, even the most difficult, and gives them positive feedback to engage them and keep them trying. Her patience with the students, her determination to help them be dancers and passion for dance seems to get through to all the students eventually.

Difference between grade 6 and grade 8 students

This session discussed the difference between grade six and grade eight. The aim of these discussions is to connect students’ behaviour with teacher content in order to

indicate the process of teaching in different classes and with different pedagogy in various age groups.

a. Grade 8 was older, so the students were more mature.

It is hard to compare them as a whole group, because there are individual differences; some of the grade six students have more confidence than grade eight students, when you look at each student individually.

b. Grade eight is more focused even without Lisa's help.

I think grade six students are young children, whereas grade 8 students seem more grown up. It is not a gigantic difference.

c. The contents are pretty much the same.

Lisa does not think there is a huge difference in the content between grade six and grade eight. Some of the dances or moves are little bit more advanced, but not much, because it is a beginner environment for them.

Even in grade 8, they are still in a beginner environment and they only get a small amount of dance each year, so you would not see a huge change in the content from grade six to grade eight. If it were something they were doing all year, then you would see a lot of progress and a lot of different programs probably for grade six and grade eight.

The interview of the students on the teacher and research

I interviewed two grade six and two grade eight students about the content activity and tried to explore the students' feelings when they were doing these activities.

Why did they feel that way? The following table is a summary of their thinking.

Table 7. Summary of Students' Comments

| | Warm-up | Cross | Routine | Choreography |
|--------|--|--|--|---|
| Alanna | Fun. I like warm-ups with stretches and turns. | Fun. We got to make up our own things and do whatever we wanted. | Fun. She (teacher) has a lot of creative moves and stuff. | Fun. They taught me some stuff and I taught them some stuff. |
| Oliver | A little bit of negativity with me, because every time in there, before we are doing the choreography, I was not thinking about dancing. | Fun. It is fun to just go across the floor, across the room and do just one thing. | Fun. I was trying to be in the middle, I did not want to be at the front of the line. Because I do not want to be the leader at the top of the line. | For the choreography thing, I was sort of like a leader. |
| Mindy | I do not really mind, but I think stretching was fun for me. | I felt little bit nervous. I felt more comfortable with a group of people | Sometimes I felt bad, because other people were not really cooperating and the teacher was getting angry. | I felt included and other people supported me. |
| Greg | Fun. I like being able to relax and really do what my body wants to do, listen to the music. | Cool. You get to watch your teacher doing things and just relax and let your body do it. | The routine was a little confusing, because you have a whole lot of time to realize what is happening. | Fun. Everybody in your group is contributing to what you want the dance to look like. |

Alanna

She showed interest in all the sections. When I asked her “What were your feelings when you were doing these activities? Why did you feel that way?” Her first word was always “fun.” From her answer, I know she really enjoyed the dance class. She liked warm-ups. “I had a really fun time. It was really fun. I like warm-up and stretching. I stretch a lot. The warm-up, a lot of turns, I like doing turns and stuff.” Moreover, she thought the cross was fun too. “It [cross] was really fun. We got to make up our own

things and do whatever we wanted. You got to do like whatever you wanted in the cross and forth.” In addition, she loved the routine. She said, “I like the routine, it was fun. She [dance teacher] has a lot of creative moves and stuff. The routine is good. She got to teach us stuff that some people have not learned.” Lastly, she enjoyed the choreography. It was her favourite part. She said, “I had fun in the choreography part. They [students] taught me some stuff and I taught them some stuff. We all put our ideas together and made a routine. It is fun.”

Oliver

Oliver always felt negative in the warm-up part “because every time in there, before we are doing the choreography, I was not thinking dancing. I did not really like dancing for those when we started choreography thing. So I was not really positive.” But he said he was concentrating as best he could. He told me he never really joined in too much in dancing; he never really tried out dancing.

However, Oliver liked the cross part in the dance class. “It was really fun. It is fun to just go cross doing karaoke steps. It is fun to just go across the floor, across the room and do just one thing.”

Moreover, Oliver loved the routine part in the class. He told me the routine was definitely pretty fun. “I was trying to be in the middle. I did not want to be at the front of line because I do not want to be the leader at the top of the line. I am not too big of a leader, I am more of a follower.” As he said, he did not want to be a leader in the routine part. I was so impressed by his answer, because from my observation, he was a group leader in the choreography part and showed strong involvement and engagement. I asked why he did not want to be a leader. He said, “For dancing, if I am a leader, everyone is

looking at me. Like ‘Hi, he is the leader, we should follow him, do what he does.’ It makes me feel like too much responsibility on my head. If I mess up, every one is going to mess up, like I am the person who controls everyone else. It makes me feel stressed.”

In the choreography part, Oliver was a leader and he was working hard to improve his group work. “For the choreography thing, I was sort of like a leader. When it is small group, like three, I am fine with that. But when it is a whole group, like five or more, then I get nervous. Because when I have a group of five, it feels like a lot more people than just three.” Here we can note that doing a dance performance in public makes Oliver nervous and stressed, but group work helps him to overcome it.

Oliver told me the choreography was his favorite part in the dance class and he enjoyed the performance in the last class. He said, “It was definitely really fun doing the solo. The solo we need is 45 seconds to 4 minutes, and our solo is 55 seconds, so I think the solo was safer. It was really fun. I like being the last one to do solo, because then it makes me feel less weird, sort of like I am following, so it makes me more relaxed. When everyone joins in with the clapping that would probably be a sign that said like ‘We got this, it is a good dance, people like this.’ I am putting in a lot of work for that. Probably more work than I do for regular school projects.” From his description of the performance, it seems he was highly involved and enjoyed dance. He also gained a sense of achievement from the process of choreography.

Also, during the dance, his fellow students clapped to encourage him to be confident and relax during the dance. I asked whether he felt nervous doing a performance in front of the whole class. He said, “A little, but not as much as I regularly feel. Because every one joined in the clapping that made me calm down, made me feel

like we got this. If you go and think about the clapping, then we got those guys to help, so they are sort of like our percussion, keeping the beat. When I got up on the stage, I had butterflies in my stomach.”

Mindy

Mindy told me that he did not really mind the warm-up but she liked the stretching. “I think stretching was fun for me. I did not really have any problem with it.” In addition, she felt nervous when she did cross forward. “I felt a little bit nervous, only two people going on that time. I felt more comfortable with a group of people. I just kind of ignored everyone and went for it. I felt embarrassed because other people were watching me and I felt more comfortable with a group. Instead of a group of two, I like a group of three or more. I like a large group. I felt more comfortable because everyone was with me. I felt like I might have done something weird, people might think of me differently.” As we can see, she was shy and preferred large group work and really cared about what the students thought.

Moreover, she liked the routine part, but sometimes she felt bad, because other peers did not cooperate. “Sometimes I felt bad, because other people were not really cooperating and the teacher was getting angry and it is kind of hard on other people, but I liked it, it was just a little embarrassing, but everyone was doing it. It is fun.” Her favourite part was the choreography. She said, “When we are making our dances, I felt included a lot. Everyone was doing a part and we worked hard on it and I am confident about it. I felt included and other people supported me.”

Greg

Greg was interested in dance. He told me he liked the warm-up section and was keen on the stretching. “I thought it was fine. I like being able to relax and really do what my body wants to do, listen to the music; that is what I like. Even just doing the warm-up, it has music, so it is fine to relax. I stretch a lot, it was not the whole new thing, but it was cool learning different dance stretches for certain parts, especially ones on the ground, because we do not do a lot of stretching on the ground for other sports, so I thought that was pretty interesting.”

The next topic was cross. He thought the cross section was cool. “Because when you are in other sports, there’s a more orderly fashion of doing it, but in cross you get to watch your teacher doing it and just relax and let your body do it. It feels neat to do stretches at a certain point, then you do not really realize you are stretching until after you feel better.” However, Greg felt confused in the routine section. He said, “Routine was a little confusing, because you have a whole of time to realize what is happening and you kind of go with it. It was still have to see what someone else doing, then I have to copy that.”

Like the other three interviewees, the choreography section was Greg’s favorite section. He indicated, “The choreography was fun, because everybody in your group is contributing to what you want the dance to look like, so it is piece by piece from everybody helping out to make, eventually, the dance routine and especially you have to pick up the song, so it is fun try to make a dance that resembles the song too, so that was interesting.”

Unlike Oliver, who liked to be a follower, Greg was keen to be a leader. He told me he was usually a leader in the class and he thought it was cool to be a leader. He said that “because some people in the group are dancers, they knew a little bit more and I am usually a leader in general just in sports in the class that was cool. I pick the song, but we all contribute mainly about the dance. It was placing people in certain spots that was interesting.”

Greg also liked teaching his peers. He told me their group dance was a modern dance from YouTube and Instagram. He and his group mimicked the movements to make the most of the dance. He explained, “It was a lot of mimicking of other dance moves and copying other dance moves. Two of the moves we made and most of the other one we mimicked from TV shows and the Internet and social media.”

Furthermore, he taught two peers how to do it and he felt it was a good experience to teach other students. He said, “It is fun, because you see them trying to do it, but not really doing it very well. You finally explain to them and you watch them do it the first time. It is funny and fun at the same time, because you compare it with what it used to look like and now they are doing it, so I was like having that.”

In summary, all the students who were interviewed felt they most enjoyed and were most involved in the choreography section. They all liked group work and participating in creating dance. They all appreciated peer support and liked to do dance with their peers. They felt it was fun during the creative process.

Insights of students learning in the class

After the course, I interviewed Lisa again to talk about her insights about the course for both grade six and grade eight students. There were several particular students

Lisa remembered in her classes. Some of them were challenging, while some of them were outstanding. Lisa told me that she felt very satisfied with the students' performance but she felt she did not have enough time with the grade eight students.

Because they had a few classes cancelled for different things like a field trip or holidays, they did not have many classes and that affected their group dances.

They did not have time to practice them. But they did well considering they did not have much time.

For grade six, she thought the students did a great job. She was impressed with a lot of the routines they came up with. They had really good creative ideas and everyone seemed to be involved, which was great.

Even the boy [Neil] was having a lot of trouble. In the end, he was able to perform with his group, which is I am really pleased about. He had a lot of challenges in getting involved. So it is nice that he could do it in the end.

For grade eight, Lisa said she liked all the dances. It was nice to see a lot of boys getting involved and quickly coming up with their own choreography. One group of five boys was all really thinking about the dance.

They had their lighting, the song and working very well, the light faded out when they started to get to the end; they had really thought it through, so it was nice.

Another really memorable group for Lisa in grade eight was the three boys, who did their dance to the song of demons.

I was really moved by their performance, because they were dramatic, I was not necessarily expecting them to do as well as they did. I was really pleased with

what they came up with and they worked really well together. They did a really nice performance that was awesome.

Lisa thinks some groups' progress was better than others, so they had a stronger performance.

In any group of people, you will always see there are people who will excel, beyond what you had expected, and there will be those who do not quite get there. But I think they all did. I was pleased with everybody's performance.

Some students were not able to perform in front of the class for some reason. Lisa felt disappointed about that.

I was not happy with the girls in grade eight who came up with the choreography, but could not perform in front of their peers. They were too shy and nervous, so they showed it to me at lunchtime, just me privately in the dance studio and they did a good job of the choreography, but they were not able to perform in front of everyone. All the boys did their performances. I did not have any boys that were too shy. One girl in that group was really shy, if she had not been shy, the other two might be able to do it. It is the influence. But that is realistic. Hopefully, in the future, they will be more comfortable and confident, but overall, I was pleased with how they did.

There were several students that were memorable for Lisa. For example, some challenging students, hardworking students or well-trained students and even students who used drama in her class impressed her.

The boy that was super challenging in the grade six class! I mean I will never remember them all because it was a long time ago, but those stand out. I

remember the challenges and also the ones that really, really love what they are doing and are enjoying being there. Those students also stand out.

She remembered the hardworking students. She gave an example from the Alanna group. “They were so keen on creating their dance that they came in and practiced during recess and outside of class time, which is always really nice to see. It’s fun to see them really enjoy it so much that they want to do it outside of class time.” Another boys group (before this class) also stood out in Lisa’s mind.

They were so into it as well, really keen on it. They came up with these costume and they did a really a good performance. I think you might have seen their performance. I can’t remember if you were here or not. Anyway, those students stand out in your mind when they are really excited about it.

Well-trained students were also memorable. For instance, Lisa was impressed with a girl in grade eight who did a tap dance performance by herself.

So she got up and did a solo performance. I’ve never had anybody do that before but she is obviously, she is studying dance about 10 hours a week outside of school time, so she is a very confident dancer, and obviously loves it. So it’s really nice to see, it’s fun to watch somebody who’s that excited it about it, and dedicated to it and to see the confidence that brings and being able to dance by yourself in front of all of your class. That is pretty incredible.

Lisa also mentioned a group of three boys. Their dance was quite dramatic. They were not dancers but they were able to do something that was still really beautiful to watch.

That really stood out for me. For example, the group of boys (Jacky, Calvin and Gary), did the dance to the song “Demons.” They stood up and I felt like they had a really nice presence and used the drama in the music really well with the movement. It wasn’t really complicated movement by any means, but it worked well, because it doesn’t have to be right, it doesn’t have to be complicated dance steps in order to be enjoyable to watch.

This comment showed that Lisa did not expect a student to perform like a professional dancer but to keep trying and do their best—the goal of Lisa’s pedagogy. Students had their own ability, learning style, and ways of expression that Lisa appreciated. She respected and protected students’ passion and perspective of dance.

Lisa Insights of Pedagogy and Engagement

When she talked about her pedagogy Lisa said she has a constructivist approach whereby the students are involved as much as possible in their own learning. She also believed that personalizing students’ learning leads to increased engagement.

An example of this is, as I mentioned before, I get them to choose their own music and dance styles or motifs they are interested in exploring in their self-directed group choreography projects. I try to make the activities as open-ended as possible to allow for creativity and a range of possible outcomes based on their personal interests and skill levels. I have found this to be quite successful in bringing about a high degree of student engagement.

Lisa told me that students were most engaged and interested in the dance choreography project. She found it was not just grade six or grade eight this time, but students love to do this project, so they were very focused.

They were all generally interested and committed to doing this dance choreography project together. I think it is probably because they pick up their own music and get to work together with their friends. Because it is creative, they are working with their team, working with their friends, choosing music by themselves, so it is something they like.

Observation Class

A description of different types of groups in the dance class

There are several types of group, which showed their dance energy when they did the group dance choreography. Students have different attitudes to dance and to middle school learning that though not fixed I can offer the description below to give a sense of how the groups behaved. Below I have summarized the way I would describe students' behaviours in four categories. Note that students may shift between categories, but these labels enable the reader to grasp a sense of how students behaved in classes. I have used animal labels to emphasize the group characteristics.

1. *Sloth group*: This group is a "slowly" group. The process in the group lack energy; no one seems to have any idea of how to contribute to their group and does not seem to enjoy dance. They seem to be unmotivated. This kind of group spends a long time deciding on the music, their beginning pose, and linking movements. They really needed the teacher's help to give them ideas and suggestions.

2. *Squirrel group*: This group likes to watch other groups work instead of concentrating on their own work. The other groups easily distracted them. They were slow, but sometimes they could get ideas from other groups or mimic other groups. They

sometimes needed the teacher to supervise them and encourage them to continue working on their own project.

3. *Deer group*: A studious and consistent group. This kind of group did not create very quickly, but they concentrated on their work and worked hard. They usually do not need the teacher's help, but sometimes they need some suggestions or ideas about creating dance.

4. *Dog group*: They were passionate about creating dance. This group is energetic and everyone contributes ideas to the dance. They seem to enjoy the creative process. They can do their dance choreography independently.

Description of Final Performances: Diversity and Ownership

Description of Performances for Grade six

At the end of the course, Lisa organized a students' performance. In their group, every student performed in front of their peers. Lisa asked the students to give a good clap after each performance and give two items of verbal positive or instructive feedback. The teacher did the assessment. It included the performance name, students' name, plus peer and teacher feedback for grade six. Below is a summary of each dance and Lisa's comments.

Students sat in front of the mirror and watched their peers' performance. The following photo shows where students sat in the classroom, which was the same for both grade six and grade eight.



Figure 4 Where students sat in the classroom

1. *Happy* (five boys: Adam, Elvis, Wilson, Rae, Haya)

Description of dance: the music they used was called “Happy,” composed by Pharrell.

The five boys stood on the stage as the beginning pose. What impressed me was their sweeping on the floor and making one line with different positions.

Peers’ feedback: good line up, keeping moving spot; five people do not act as individuals.

Could be longer.

Teacher’s feedback: Great teamwork! Loved the solos. Good solid ending pose. Would have been great to see a bit more choreography and a longer dance. Nice job overall, boys!

2. *Me and My Girls* (six girls, but missing two girls: Anny, Jucy, Fairy, Gina, Karen, Kathy)

Description of dance: the music was “Me and My Girls” by Fifth Harmony. The group was missing two girls and they felt upset about that. But they quickly changed their

formation and did a good dance performance. I was impressed by one formation when one girl did a low back as a bridge and the other girls crawled through the bridge.

Peers' feedback: The bridge was good. Make it longer. The back and forth part could add more things. Good. If it were six people, it would be great.

Teacher's feedback: Great teamwork! Lots of fun movement. Great energy. Love the bridge crawl through. Good for you for being flexible and adapting to missing two dancers at the last minute! Wonderful work overall.

3. *Moves like Jagger* (three boys: Oliver, Kai, Jame)

Description of dance: The music was "Moves Like Jagger" by Maroon 5. The three boys were so happy. They did many turns and influenced other students to clap in time with their movement. It seemed everyone joined in the performance.

Peers' feedback: Liked the clapping part of the dance. Like what we do. We were laughing a lot during the dance; it made me happy. Good choreography. It had a lot of energy.

Teacher's feedback: Great energy, strong beginning. Love the spins! Nice canons! Great involvement of audience in claps!

4. *Do the John Wall*. (five boys: Neil, Joe, Stan, Cade, Ray)

Description of dance: The music was "Do the John Wall" by Troop 41. The boys did many arm movements with body bounces to the rhythm. They mimicked the Troop 41 MV and did a good job with adding their own creative movement combined with MV.

Peers' feedback: Liked the solo part. Liked the end part of dance. No body choreography, all the hand moving.

Teacher's feedback: Nice organized intro. Good energy! Nice choreography on chorus! Great solos! Loved the shoulder stand! Fun tricks! Great lift of Neil. Great teamwork guys! Watch spacing on ending.

5. *Boom Clap* (five girls: Babe, Han, Jenny, Hay, and Ann)

Description of dance: The music was "Boom Clap" by Charli XCX. They did many high kicks and cut movements.

Peers' feedback: Loved the feet movement. Liked the split. Liked the partner part of the dance.

Teacher's feedback: Nice organization. Interesting formations, solos. Great energy! Love the high kicks! Great interpretation of lyrics and mood of the song you chose. It would have been great to see a bit more, longer choreography. Fantastic job overall.

6. *Pop Danthology 2014* (four girls: Alanna, Tea, Jill, Andy)

Description of dance: the music called "Pop Danthology 2014" by DJ Daniel Kim. I was impressed by their creative movements, which fitted with the music very well. Their movements were well planned and clear. I can see they spent a lot of time on it.

Peers' feedback: Liked every move. Very good choreography. Good, and at the end, I started laughing.

Teacher's feedback: great beginning canon. Excellent timing on choreography. Loved the cartwheel in unison. Great transitions in music. Nice energy. Good use of different levels.

Be sure to hold the pose at the end.

Description of Performances for Grade Eight

Lisa also managed a students' performance at the end of course for grade eight. The rule was the same as grade six in that every student performed with their group in front of their peers and gave other performers a good clap after the performing with two verbal positive or instructive pieces of feedback. The teacher did the assessment. Every student was sitting in front of the mirror and paying attention to the performance. The following includes the performance name, students' name, and peer and teacher feedback.

1. *Crank That* (five boys: Kay, Ken, Mac, Lee, Jay)

Description of dance: the music was "Crank That" by Soulja Boy. One boy was sitting on a chair at the beginning and three boys were around him. Then they started to move in the middle and dance. After the final pose, the light faded down.

Peers' feedback: Good and clean, like the song, good beginning, fun choreography.

Teacher's feedback: Nice Incorporated of drama. Great sync. Great teamwork. Good interpretation of music.

2. *Demons* (three boys: Calvin, Vadin, Gary)

Description of dance: the music was "Demons" by Imagine Dragons. At the beginning, one boy was in the centre and pushed two boys on either side of him. It was the only modern dance in the whole class, which flowed and was emotional.

Peers' feedback: One movement is one boy pushing away another two boys; one student said he liked that very much. Light going down was really good. Drama added to the dance. Used space well.

Teacher's feedback: Excellent interpretive dance. Very dramatic, captivating. Well rehearsed. Synchronous.

3. *Albatraoz* (five girls: Mini, Belle, Nancy, Nina, Olia)

Description of dance: the music was “I’m an Albatraoz” by AronChupa. They did a lot of footwork at high speed and changed several formations.

Peers’ feedback: Liked the kicks, beautiful choreography, footwork is great, move different shape.

Teacher’s feedback: Loved the song choice. Great opening canon. Interesting steps. All knew it very well. Great use of levels. Loved end pose.

4. *Move* (solo girl: Helen)

Description of dance: the music was “Move.” It was the only solo. Helen loves dance and took many dance classes outside of school. She did a tap dance with good skills and great confidence.

Peers’ feedback: Confident, choreography excellent, move the zone, like the tapping noises, the music with dance combined is good.

Teacher’s feedback: Love the tap! Great confidence; amazing choreography. Super entertaining. Beautiful turns.

5. *Ayo* (five boys: Kal, Patty, Greg, Zach, John)

Description of dance: the music was “Ayo” by Chris Brown/Tyga. The boys waved their body naturally and every one did a small solo in the middle.

Peers’ feedback: They all wore black T-shirts that made the same costume, which is very good. Like the wave, costume, and song. Music matched the choreography. Mini solo was good.

Teacher’s feedback: Nice staggered beginning, great synchronicity.

6. *Waves* (three girls: Kia, Kate, Hary)

Description of dance: the music was “Waves” by Axero. They walked in with the music and made their arms move with the lyrics. They did turning and waving and spins out to the side of the stage as the last pose.

Teacher’s feedback: Loved the canon, mini group formations. Loved the wave movement interpretations. Nice synchronicity. Great interpretation of lyrics.

7. Trini Dern Girls (two girls: Kra, Pary)

Description of dance: the music was “Trini Dern Girls” by Nicki Mindyj. The two girls moved their shoulders, turning and waving with big smiles.

Teacher’s feedback: Awesome timing. Great choreography. Fun song. Love the African influence movements.

In grade eight one boy had hurt his arm, so he could not do the performance. Lisa gave him the “job” of controlling the light. Every group told him when to fade down the lights. Two girls controlled the music. Before the performance, students tried different lighting and chose what they felt most comfortable with. It was a soft light. The students who were not in the performances sat down in front of the mirror and were quiet. At the end, students faded the music and the light.

Students’ Feedback for the dance class

At the end of course, I interviewed two girls and two boys in grade six and grade eight. They described their feelings about the course.

Alanna

I had a fun time during the choreography with my friends, because you usually do not make dance up and dance stuff by yourself and friends, so it is fun to do it. I

really like Lisa's style and stuff with dance. I always like dance and she made me like it more. I had a lot of fun with her.

From her response, we know that she enjoyed working with her friends to create dance. She had fun during Lisa's course.

Greg

The class was fun. I am taking dance in high school too, so it is kind of cool to have some sort of thing to go with. It was pretty fun. It is nice to hang out with the music and kind of making your own stuff. It is cool to have a teacher here. It is also cool to be able to make a routine together.

Lisa changed Greg's attitude toward dance. He said:

I never had a dance teacher talk to me before, so it was cool to see how in comparing different activities I do such as sports, how a sports coach talks to you, how a dance coach talks to you. It is cool to compare those, because there are a lot more suggestions from the dance teacher, not really like in another sport, you have to do this, you have to do that. When it comes to dance, like, I feel you do a lot better doing this move here instead of there or picking this song here and kind of things like that.

As we can see, Greg liked sports and his older brother was keen on dance in high school and recommend that Greg take it. But Greg was not sure about taking it. After Lisa's dance class, he started to like dance and decided to take dance course in high school.

Mindy

Mindy told me that she did not do a lot of dance, but she enjoyed it during the course, because it allowed her to meet other students. She said, "What made my dance

experience better was just having a good group of friends. So I found I am more confident in what I am doing.” She also told me that her friends said that she was good at dance and it gave her more ideas. When they finished the final performance, they were very happy. During the choreography section in her group, she volunteered an idea about how to create a dance and her peers accepted her idea. She was so happy about that and felt engaged with her peers. I asked how her peers supported and engaged her and she told me that when her peers accepted her ideas in the choreography or when she was telling them her ideas, they said, “Yes, I like that. We can add it here.” Or they included her. Some people said, “That is really great, you worked hard.” Sometimes her peers said, “Now it is really good. Your dance is really good.” When her peers said that, she felt engaged and energetic. She also felt supported when other peers were watching them dance. The students clapped them and gave them feedback after the performance. When we were practicing, some people came to watch.

Mindy was not confident about dancing before the course but the support from her group work help her to build her confidence, express her ideas, and become involved in dance class.

Oliver

Oliver said the course was definitely fun. But he was always very cautious whenever he was dancing, because he thought he was not the best dancer and he had never been huge into dancing, never really said, “Let us dance now.” But the dance course helped him realize what dance is all about and how to dance. He said, “Usually I cannot really dance. I do not know any dances. So the dance course probably helped me a

lot.” Oliver also told me Lisa used more time in dance rather than drama, which made him concentrate on dance rather than drama. He said:

She probably changes focus by making dance a big thing, like because she cut drama time to do more dancing, she made dancing seem way bigger than drama. She cut 10 minutes of our drama time to do to dance. Dance got 65% of the time and drama got 35% of the time. It made me think it is just dance class, then I began to accept it for what it was, a dance class mainly. So that I guess changed my reaction to dancing.

Oliver did not know much about dance before the course. Lisa helped him to realize what dance is and increased his passion for dance. He told me he is looking forward to the dance course next year.

Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore the teaching approaches that promote children's engagement in dance. I interviewed the dance teacher and four students in grade 6 and grade 8, as well as observing two classes, noting students' behaviour and their engagement. The pedagogy of the teacher will be discussed in this chapter.

The aim of these discussions is (a) to share through personal narratives how I saw the learning in the dance class unfolding in order to let more readers know about dance education in a typical middle school, (b) to explore how a dance teacher describes her understanding of teaching dance so the children enjoy dance and c) explore how selective students responded and expressed their experience.

First, I will discuss my research questions and the teacher's insights and pedagogy in the context of the teaching process. Second, the students' responses will be discussed. In the third section, I provide interpretations of Lisa's teaching based on the literature, her reflections on her future teaching as well as my personal insights into the dance courses in middle school.

The research question was: "How does a dance teacher engage children and enable all children in a middle school dance program to enjoy dance?" First, I will discuss the sub-research question: "What are critical memories that inform your practice as a dance teacher?"

What are Critical Memories to Inform Your Practice as a Dance Teacher?

Shagrir (2015) noted that teachers' personal experience influenced their dance teaching. More specifically, "Personal variables can include years of teaching experience,

professional maturity, confidence in teaching, events in the individual's professional history and the like" (p. 791). The followings are Lisa's personal memories of learning to dance, which seemed to inform her dance pedagogy.

Music choice

Lisa had many valuable memories about learning dance. She loved dancing to music; however, when she was in her university course, the dance teacher did not allow them to use music to create dance, which was a big challenge for her. She understood that was because her teacher did not want music to effect the process of creating movement. It was a requirement for university students but not for middle school students.

Though this allowed her to become a better dancer, more aware of how movement expressed ideas, in her own class she used music as an incentive for students to learn how to dance. She felt that it was critical to ask students what kind of music they liked that she could then encourage them to use it during practice and development of their dances.

Performance: Trying to do Better

Lisa did many performances. She told me that sometimes the performance was difficult and she had to work hard and do lots of practice. After she had finished the performance, she felt excited and looked forward to the next time. The insights went from nervous to happy and enjoying the stage, to excited. The performance was a part of the pedagogy to engage students in continuing to study dance, for them to want to practice their dances.

In Lisa's dance class, she set a "performance" at the end of the course. Students had a lot of freedom during creative dance. First, they could work as a group or as soloists. Second, they could choose any dance style or music. Third, they could mimic

any MTV or dance performance. She expected every student to perform in class. However, if some students felt uncomfortable performing in front of their peers, she allowed students to perform before her. Furthermore, she was patient and kept encouraging students to try and practice, but she did not push students if they did not want to do it. If students had a problem, she was happy to solve it by helping them to choose music, create movements, or form groups. She did not expect a professional dance performance but wanted students to do the best they could.

Group Work

Lisa did a lot of group work when she was in university. At university she started to teach her peers. They worked together and created dances. She said, “I was kind of teaching them a dance and they would teach me a dance too.”

She enjoyed group work and teaching her peers. As she said, “It is fun to come up with your own choreography and see other people doing it, teaching it to them and having them make your work come alive, it is really cool.” As Allen (2012) noted about students working in a group: “Group members take more responsibility for one another's learning as well as their own” (p. 309), which means every person in the group is responsible for the choreography and contributes to a successful team effort.

When she became a dance teacher, Lisa offered group work in cross and choreography. The group work provided a good chance to enhance students' communication so that they could teach each other. They got ideas from other class members by watching other groups' performances or even mimicking their movements and combining them into their own dances.

In summary, this section shows how a dance teacher's personal learning experience influenced her teaching style. Music, a positive attitude to improvement, and working in groups were all likely to have contributed to Lisa's conceptions of dance and illustrate how those experiences combined within her teaching.

What Does Teaching Dance in Local Middle School Look Like?

This section discusses teaching dance in middle school. It is divided into three parts and helps readers to understand (a) the structure of a dance class, (b) how a dance teacher works with students, and (c) how a dance teacher deals with students who do not like dance.

The structure of the class

The class was divided into five parts, which included attendance checking, warm-up, cross, routine, and dance choreography. The attendance checking took about five to 10 minutes. Warm-up was about five to 10 minutes. Cross was about five to 10 minutes. Routine was about 10 minutes. After the middle term, the time taken by warm-up, cross, and routine decreased and shifted to dance choreography, which took about 20 minutes. The attendance check, warm-ups, and routines were led by the teacher; in the cross and dance choreography the students became more self-directed, working in groups.

How to work with students

After the attendance check, the first section was warm-up. The warm-up section included stretching, turning, and jumping in order to increase body temperature and reduce injury through dance practice. Lisa added some basic movements during warm-up. These basic movements were fragments from cross or routine. Putting basic movements in warm-up helps students to master the movements more quickly.

The next section was cross, which was moving from one side of the classroom to the other. Lisa set a basic movement for the students. The students could choose to follow it or create their own style based on it. Lisa increased the difficulty for some students who were at a higher level. For example, one turn changed to a double turn or more complex steps based on the basic moves. Sometimes, the cross was just freestyle. Students were not limited in creating steps that they could do by themselves or in cooperation with their group.

After the cross came routine. Students followed Lisa in a hip-hop dance. Lisa mixed boys and girls together. Before the routine, students could stand in any position they liked. As a result, boys were on one side and girls were on the other side. The separation was based on gender. In the routine, Lisa mixed the genders. In each line, the boys and girls were balanced, which increased communication between the boys and girls in class.

The next section was choreography. Students worked in groups of three to six to create a choreographed dance in the style of students' choice. Students chose the music and a simple costume for the performance. The choreography had to be a minimum of 60 seconds and a maximum of four minutes. Every student had to perform his or her work for the class. Students could form a group. If someone had trouble making a group, Lisa would help them. Students could prepare their group dance in the classroom, the hallway, or somewhere close to the dance studio where Lisa could easily find them and watch their dance to give suggestions. Students got a sheet that included group members' names, a song title, starting pose, sections 1, 2, 3, and a finishing pose. They could make notes on it.

Students who do not like dance

From my observations I described four kinds of attitudes toward dance in the grade 6 and grade 8 class: they included reticent, indifferent, quite like it, and love it. Lisa believed that some boys and girls did not like dance because of feeling girly, lacking confidence, being nervous and shy or they did not know how to dance. As a result, the pedagogy involved removing the girly attitude, helping students to build up confidence, engaging students to reduce nervousness, and building dance realization and awareness. More specifically, Lisa always engaged students to keep trying dance, to show respect for others by encouraging them. Some students showed little interest in dance and some even told Lisa they did not want to dance or did not like dance. Lisa would encourage them and she did her best to make class fun and interesting for all the students. She asked what music or dance style they liked and tried to bring it into the class. For example, some boys liked basketball, so she told them that they could do some basketball movements and incorporate them in dance.

As a way of recognizing the types of student behaviours in the dance class, I have created Figure 3 based on two continuums. The x-axis is a love-to-hate attitude to dance when entering the class, and the y-axis is a shyness/lack of confidence to confident/like-to-perform attitude to dance. Figure 3 illustrates four types of students, including students X who loved dance and performance; students A who loved dance but were shy or too nervous to perform; students Y who hated dance but liked to perform; students Z who hated dance because of being shy or nervous. Lisa tried to change students' attitudes and encourage students Y, Z, and A to become students X.

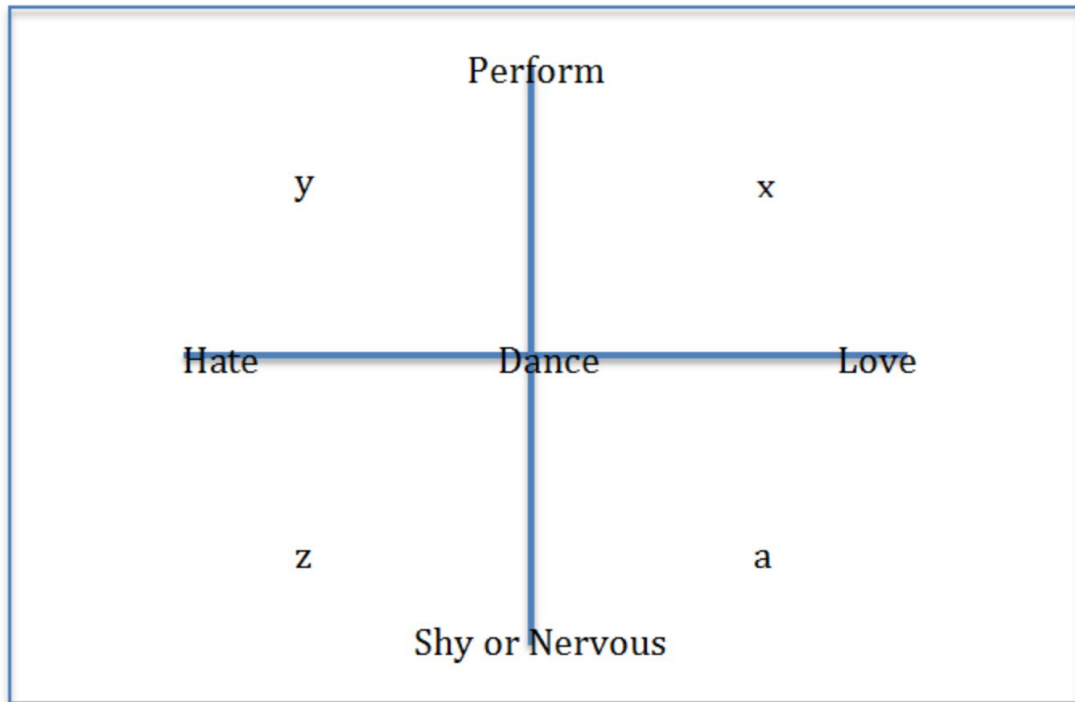


Figure 5 Type of Student Attitude to Dance

Figure 3 captures two critical attitudes that Lisa had to shift to help students enjoy dance. One main reason why students hated dance were based on their stereotypical view of dance as being feminine and not for males. Lisa was able to nurture a love of dance by choosing a suitable dance style and music for both boys and girls; incorporating fun and creative instruction; keeping them involved; and engaging students. To address the lack of confidence in dance and shyness Lisa was patient and kept encouraging students to practice, without pushing students to dance so they could make the choice by themselves. Also, if the students were too shy to perform in front of their peers, she allowed them to perform just in front of her, but they still had to perform. This strategy protected students' feelings. By the end of the class every student, even very resistant students such as Neil (described in chapter 4), were engaged and demonstrating enjoyment. In my opinion all students had moved into quadrants "A" or "X." Critically, Lisa had to locate triggers

(things that students enjoyed) in students' lives that they liked doing and then integrate those triggers into dances they could choreograph. For Neil it was doing the shoulder stand; for others it was the sport or dance moves they had learned outside school.

How Does a Dance Teacher use Different Strategies to Engage Both Girls and Boys?

As Krasnow and Mainwaring (2010) indicated, all dance teachers have their own personalities and constraints that affect their teaching strategies. At the same time, every student shows their variety "ability, talent, personality and learning styles" (p. 14). Moreover, "effective teaching of dance skills is informed by a variety of theoretical frameworks, strategies, and individual styles" (Krasnow & Mainwaring, 2010, p. 14). How does a dance teacher teach students with different personalities and attitudes to dance? Are there any methods that encourage both girls and boys to become involved in dance while building confidence and self-esteem? Based on these questions, I observed Lisa's classes and analysed the various teaching strategies she used.

A variety of practices supported student motivation and increased student engagement, including purposeful pedagogy, creating trust, within and between group interactions, quality movement, adapting to shy children, and nervous resistance.

Purposeful Pedagogy

Purposeful pedagogy can be separated into three parts including (a) offering students choices and autonomy, (b) ongoing teacher assessment and student self-assessment, and (c) positive feedback with timely suggestions.

Offering students choices and autonomy

In the current education system, there is a shift from teacher-directed learning to student-directed processes. As Amabile (1983) said, “A primarily intrinsic motivation to engage in an activity will enhance creativity” (p. 366). Shernoff and Ebrary (2013) showed that “one important component of keeping students emotionally engaged is responding to the individual learning style of each student by allowing them to interact with materials in different ways and places, in order for them to develop academically, socially, and emotionally” (p. 133). In Lisa’s class, students had their ownership of style. Lisa was always engaging students to follow their interests; for example, music, type of dance, costume, movements, and so on. During the cross and choreography section, Lisa allowed students to choose groups that allowed them to work with peers that they liked. In summary, Lisa provided opportunities for students to explore dance through their personal choice.

Ongoing assessment by teacher and self-assessment by students

For teachers in the field of dance education, assessing students can be a challenging prospect. Petersen (2008) noted:

Ideally, assessment becomes an important part of the feedback process, assisting the educator and students in clarifying goals, and increasing awareness of what is being taught, and how it is being interpreted. Adopting meaningful, classroom-friendly approaches to assessment can thus benefit the teacher/administrator and the student/artist alike. (p. 192)

Two assessments will be discussed: summative assessment and formative assessment. Krasnow and Mainwaring (2010) indicated: “Summative classroom

assessment is designed to evaluate learning for the purposes of assigning scores, grades, or rankings” (p. 47). It is only to measure students instead of ongoing feedback. In contrast, “formative assessment is the process of clarifying the learning and performance goals of an assignment, lesson, or unit; providing ongoing feedback about students’ progress toward those goals; and revising instruction and student work according to that feedback” (Krasnow & Mainwaring, 2010, p. 14).

In order to encourage students to become involved in dance class, the assessment in Lisa’s class was based on students’ attitudes and improvement during the learning process. It provided feedback to students so that they could deepen their quality of learning and improve themselves.

Lisa made an assessment sheet in two parts. The first part had a four-feedback scale: rarely, sometimes, usually and always. It focused on students’ responsibility and respect for self and others by the requirement of practising safe, positive behaviour, respecting peers, cooperating with peers and the teacher. The second part had a three-point feedback scale: satisfactory achievement, good achievement and excellent achievement. It concentrated on improvement and attitude during practising; for example, developing knowledge of dance steps, creating/performing choreography, doing teamwork in class presentations, willingness to participate in new activities, and improvement of dance skills.

In summary, the key to Lisa’s assessment is focusing on students’ improvement and involvement instead of measuring students based on students’ dance skills and levels. As Shernoff and Ebrary (2013) noted, “The key to educational approaches is respect for and valuation of individuals with unique backgrounds and ability profiles, and providing

relevant curricula with choices and ongoing assessments appropriate for the individuals present” (p. 133). Lisa focused on using one part of the assessment process to value improvement and purposeful involvement.

Positive feedback with timely suggestions

Feedback can be three separate functions, which include: “information to direct error correction, reinforcement, and motivation” (Gibbons, 2004, p. 38). It enables students to correct their mistakes in movement, do better in their performance, and understand and reinforce correct movements and performance (Gibbons, 2004, p. 38). Mouratidis, Vansteenkiste, and Sideridis (2008) noted, “Positive feedback, relative to no feedback, resulted in higher self-reported enjoyment, more free-choice persistence, and a greater interest for doing more of the same activity in the near future” (p. 241). Positive feedback and praise also increases students’ autonomy and improves their intrinsic motivation (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002, p. 11). Moreover, “positive feedback can provide powerful motivation, because it allows students to see that they are making progress and that they are valued (p. 38).

Lisa used two types of feedback in class. The first one was verbal feedback. Gibbons (2004) indicated: “Verbal behaviour refers to vocalizations as well as words,” such as “great; or bring your arm a little higher” (p. 40). The second type of feedback was visual and it included:

Facial expressions such as an approving smile or a frown, hand movements to indicate the actions of the feet, a circular gesture of the index finger to indicate a turn, and full demonstrations. Visual feedback also includes symbols such as a

written analysis or description, dance notation, photographs, or drawings.

(Gibbons, 2004, p. 40)

More specifically, Lisa always gave feedback to students during warm-up, cross, routine, choreography and final performance orally and in writing which used verbal and visual feedback. She engaged with students by giving positive feedback with a big smile, such as “Great, elegant, good ending, a lot of good work, awesome. I love it! You guys are doing so well today, the beginning is awesome. It looks great and keep practising.”

Timely suggestions are important in students’ learning process. Lisa made many suggestions, especially during students’ group choreography. She went around and gave them suggestions when they got stuck, or sometimes helped students create movements if they did not know how to create them.

In order to support students’ self-assessment, Lisa gave students a “dance choreography group project rubric,” and asked students to give two items of positive feedback to other students. This process helped students’ comprehension of the evaluation standards and criteria of the dance choreography project, and it involved students in the dance project assessment. Liu and Carless (2006) suggested that promoting students’ involvement in assessment offered a good chance to build on students’ conceptions of quality and helped them understand and process teachers’ feedback (pp. 287-288). Simons and Leijen (2009) noted, “Students can also use their own subjective criteria after they have made these explicit. This would support students in learning about their own conceptions and value judgments” (p. 324).

Peer feedback helps students to understand the reflection process. Simons, Leijen, Wildschut, and Lam (2009) noted:

Owing to the perceived expertise of teachers and power relations, it can be difficult for students to consider their teachers' comments critically. Students may be more open to questioning the comments given by their fellow students. It may also be easier emotionally to accept feedback from peers instead of that provided by the teacher. (p. 324)

In the last class, there was a performance for grade 6 and grade 8 in which every student performed their group-work dance. The students sat in front of mirrors and watched other peers' dances. Lisa asked them to pay attention to the performance, give appreciative applause, and give two items of positive or instructive feedback. As we can see, Lisa provided an environment that directed students' respect for each other. She assessed the quality of their dances but this was only one aspect of a multi-faceted approach to assessment. The clapping helped students to gain confidence from their peers' supportive response. The positive feedback helped students to note their peers' merits. The instructive feedback helped students realize how they could improve themselves. By allowing students to provide feedback to each other, Lisa not only helped students concentrated on their peers' performance, learning from each other, but also helped students understand her assessments of their performances as they developed the concept of quality in dance.

Creating Trust

“Students need trusting relationships with one another as a foundation for building small groups that can learn together” (Allen, 2012, p. 309). Thus, Lisa offered opportunities for students to work together in dance choreography, cross and routine, in order to develop trust between students and make them acquainted with each other's

dances. She created a trusting environment by helping students with their projects and encouraging them to work in mixed-gender groups.

Helping with dance skills and projects

Shagrir (2015) discussed three important teaching methods: “(a) To help and assist students to succeed in their studies, (b) to empower students and help them grow, and (c) to serve as a mediator for students between teaching theories and practice” (p. 791). In Lisa’s courses, she helped students to improve their dance skills. For instance, in the choreography class, Lisa went around to each group and helped them create steps if they were having difficulty. Moreover, she made students work in a group, which helped them grow up and think of questions independently. She was like a mediator, solving problems between students in order to help them complete the project successfully.

Encourage students to work in a group.

The group work has many benefits for students. For example, it improves students’ ability to “fit together” (Argote, 1982, p. 423), and “the organizing of individuals so that their actions are aligned” (Heath & Staudenmayer, 2000, p. 154).

Harrison and Rouse (2014) indicated that the work of group creation required students to have their own ideas and share them with peers as well as listen to other peers’ ideas. After that, students needed to discuss the ideas and build a novel solution (p. 1256).

In order to help students improve their cooperation and communication, Lisa engaged students in groups. Lisa helped the students who had social problems to become involved in groups. When the students quarrelled, Lisa helped them to communicate and solve the problem.

Mixing boys and girls

During my observation, I found that students usually liked to work with peers of the same gender in grade 6 and grade 8. When students made a line by themselves during warm-up, they chose to be near their same-gender friends. They automatically did group work doing cross with the same gender. In neither class did I see a boy and a girl cooperate as a group. In order to solve this issue and encourage boys and girls to cooperate, Lisa mixed the genders when they were doing the routine section. She counted one, two, three, four which meant the first line, second line, third line, and fourth line. It was not only mixed genders, but also mixed students who might not communicate a lot. Overall, mixing genders seem to cause more communication between students than making groups by themselves. It offered more opportunities to know their peers, helping them cooperate and exercise together. The key thing they had in common was not their social experiences outside of class, but rather the task of creating a dance.

From those teacher-with-students, and students-with-students activity developed a relationship of trust and an environment of safety. Simons, Leijen, Wildschut, and Lam (2009) believed:

Safety and trust need to be established in a classroom in order to support the activities of reflection, especially for dealing with delicate matters related to individuality and other areas of the self. This is particularly important since, besides enabling awareness of the self, which can be challenging to recognise, reflection activities in an educational setting often imply that the private areas of learning become public. (p. 324)

Within and between groups for each other

There are many benefits for students who experience well-implemented group work. The benefits include students “having more opportunities to articulate their thinking; exhibiting deeper understanding and retention of concepts; welcoming the ideas of others and incorporating them into their own strategies; and feeling less isolated and anxious” (Allen, 2012, pp. 308-309).

Within and between groups, students experienced a process “transforming them from a group of individuals, focused on self-interest, into a team, committed to ensuring that each person succeeds” (Allen, 2012, p. 309). Moreover, Allen (2012) argued that students need to share their ideas, but they do not have a sense of safety to share ideas openly in a classroom “unless a supportive culture exists.” This means teachers need to create a comfortable and supportive environment that allows students and teachers to exchange their insights and make mistakes (p. 309). As a result, Lisa offered creative instruction, which reminded students to have a creative attitude in dance, not to be afraid of making mistakes, and respecting others’ ideas. The goal was helping students build creative ideas that influenced each other and broadened their view of dance.

Caring instruction

The class environment was open and creative so that students could create their style of movement and express their ideas in dance in the cross and choreography sections. The decoration in the classroom helped students understand the rules of the class and reminded students what kind of behaviours are appreciated during class. For example, on the wall were notices which said: “Attitude + ability = success.” “Create.” “Be accepting, be caring, be compassionate, be honest, be respectful, be understanding,

be you!” The notices stated the importance of students’ attitude, creative spirit, and good behaviour to peers and the teacher.

Quality movement

The section of quality movement can be explored in four parts including: direct instruction, dance style, increasing dance background for students, and a strategy of “making the balance” and finding a suitable level for students. In her instruction process Lisa would use direct instruction during the teaching process to improve students’ movements and give students a sense of what is dance and how to dance. It did not only provide knowledge of dance, but also increased students’ realization of the dance experience. The direct instruction was offered during warm-up and routine.

In relation to dance style Lisa told me that she liked to ask students what dance style they liked from what they had done in class or seen in the media. She found that most students liked hip-hop so she offered many hip-hop movements during the warm-up and routine sections. However, Lisa also offered experiences in different types of dance style to increasing the dance background of students. She did this by teaching different movements and dance steps, and encouraging students to use their personal dance experience to enhance other students’ dance knowledge.

Lisa had to develop a strategy of “making the balance” and finding a suitable level for students. As it was obvious that students were at different levels and interest in dance, so Lisa had to find a suitable level for students to make dance important. Lisa told me that she was trying to create a balance for students so that they did not feel bored by easy content and did not lose interest because of too big a challenge.

Shy kids and nervous resistance

The section of shy kids and nervous resistance can be explored in four parts including removing the “girly” attitude from class. Confidence is a word Lisa always likes to talk about in the teaching process as well as emotional care.

Removing the “girly” attitude from class

Fredenburg, Cleveland, Belcher, and Lee (1999) declared, “Stereotypes can have powerful influences on children's thinking about their own competence and thus might limit their effort and persistence to those activities considered sex-appropriate” (p. 162).

Thus, removing stereotypes is an important factor in the dance process. To remove the girly attitude about dance, Lisa chose neutral dance styles, such as hip-hop, instead of ballet or modern dance, which is regarded as more suitable for girls. She also tried to choose music that was appropriate for both boys and girls. With the neutral style, students and especially boys got a sense of dance that worked for both sexes.

Confidence is a word Lisa always likes to talk about in the teaching process.

Helping students build up confidence is an important teaching method. Some students, especially girls, are too shy to express themselves in front of peers. They are worried about peers’ negative feedback and are afraid to make any mistakes, because their peers will laugh at them.

Emotional care

Lisa was concerned about students’ emotions during class; for example, if they were too shy to perform in public, unhappy, uncomfortable, and so on. Lisa always communicated with those students who felt uncomfortable and she found the best way to solve these issues.

Case study: Exceptional Students—Beyond Shyness

Neil was an exceptional student in Lisa's class. He got angry easily and did not want to learn dance. Neither did he like to cooperate with his peers. He did not show any interest in dance at the beginning of the course. However, Lisa was patient and always gave students a chance if they were willing to participate at any time. She never gave up on Neil. She kept engaging him to participate and work with his peers. As a result, he did excellent work in the final dance performance with his group. It was a huge step for Neil from his reticent and indifferent attitude toward dance. During the practice and performance, his peers clapped him, many people appreciated him, and he got positive feedback from Lisa. This experience provides motivation, which will influence his future study.

Why do some girls or boys like to dance and others do not?

In order to figure out why some girls and boys like dance, I asked four students what they thought were boys' and girls' general impression of dance? From the students' answers, I realized further insight into dance.

Alanna the dancer

Alanna thought that girls usually like dance more than boys. "Girls just like do whatever dance that is good. Girls can be more girly and boys probably find that dance is girly. Boys like sport and stuff. I like sports. I like watching sports, but I do not play many sports. I have done soccer before but I quit it, because it interfered with dance. She told me that her dance class outside of school was all girls. She mentioned that girls like all different types of dance, but boys just like hip-hop. "I found that boys like hip-hop

more than girls and they do not like ballet stuff that much. Girls tend to like all dance styles. Guys just hip-hop usually.”

Oliver the hip hop dancer

Oliver thought that most boys are not huge on dancing “because normally the ballets you see, it is all girls and stuff like that. So it is like a stereotype that girls are dancing. Boys like rap songs, and stuff like that, which is not too big.” He continued, “Dancing like for the ‘john wall’ is doing this (move arm sharp and strongly), not jumping across the stage, doing a 260, landing on one foot and balancing, like a ballet or something.” I asked why he thought ballet is for girls rather than boys. He told me because in the TV shows he watches, it is mainly all girls. However, when I asked him about hip-hop, he told me hip-hop is more a boys’ dance.

I like hip-hop dancing, like “move like Jagger,” it always be a song I like. It is probably one of my favourite songs and probably a pretty easy one to dance. I think it is more for boys’ dance. Ballet is more like a calm. Usually girls are more calm and boys are more fast paced. Boys are more into sports and sports’ songs are mainly like rock. I always have this stereotype in my head.

Oliver also thought that girls are definitely more into dancing, Oliver thought that 70% of girls love dance and they want to dance and want to do dance parties. He said:

Mainly the girls in my class are major dancers; they love dancing. More girls like dancing than boys do. Instead of girls playing football, girls like being cheerleaders. You see most cheerleaders are girls. There are not many cheerleaders are boys. When cheerleaders are doing cheers, mainly are dancing,

Mindy “dance...activity that someone can enjoy, it does not matter whether girls or boys”

Mindy noticed that in her class or her sister’s class, many boys might like dance, but society has shaped them not to like dance. Because society tells boys that dance is a girly thing, boys tend not to take it as seriously as some other people. She said:

Consistently they grow up being told you are not allowed to play with Barbie dolls because it is for girls. You can take this toy truck instead. Just growing up to learn that dance is not for boys, not for everyone to enjoy. I would not say boys do not like dance, I would say they might not touch it. I think it happened because of how people teach them about different genders.

Mindy told me about her attitude toward gender that boys do not do girly things, and dance is considered girly. Another example is that girls always associate with pink and boys with blue. Moreover, boys are associated with trucks and computers. But she did not think that people should be so separated with pink and blue.

A long time ago, people told me that sport is for boys; girls should always be cooking. In the other classes, we had woodwork that would be considered a boy’s activity. We did that and I do sport as well.

I was interested in the idea that boys should do more sport and girls should be cooking. I asked her who told her this and she said:

The Internet told me and other family members told me that, but they would not say “I should do this,” they just let me know that it is how apparently the world was, they were quick to open to what I want to do.

In addition, Mindy told me girls generally like dance. But some of them are really shy.

She said:

A lot of them did used to dance as me, how I did in elementary. I think they like dance. I think they may find it pressure in a way. I did. I found pressuring, when I have certain amount of time to make dance performance in the whole class. It is not just girl think about it as well; it is also boys who will experience that feeling. Because it is in front of the whole class that is a lot of people, embarrassing and they might not find the ideas they produce to be entertaining. Someone does not clap, means they hate me or they are thinking about me.

Mindy said she felt nervous when she was performing in the class.

I found I was nervous but not that nervous. I felt ready to do the dance, because everyone would do it. I felt very proud of myself after performing, because we did a good job and everyone was supportive and the class was supportive this year, so even if you messed up, there would not be a problem. I think because we practiced and everyone just felt confident about it.

She also thought that girls tend to like dancing more than boys, because of family, social and peers' influence.

Some of the parents think it is more feminine. Some parents are like mine but some are not. Some think the girls should be more engaged in dance, so they sign them up as a small child and keep on going to dance, just as some people start at sports. Some parents only avoid to do sports. So they sign up when they were young and keep building up until they are older, something like that. Maybe it is because people are telling other people what to do, parents are basically shaping

children like a certain thing whether girls or boys. I think everyone should be open to do dance, because it is not like gender, one gender is tied to one thing. It is not like just girls or boys doing it. Do not identify girls or boys. I think dance should just be an activity that someone can enjoy, it does not matter whether girls or boys. It is just be something you are having fun with and you think that you are doing well.

Greg “boys get together and dance, it make sense”

Greg believed that most guys think dance is for girls, but if boys get together and dance, it makes sense. However, Greg said he likes dance and he thinks dance is fun and more boys should try it. He thinks girls like dance better than boys, but he also said many of his girl friends told him that they felt tired after the dance course. He thought many boys were “angry” and felt like breaking things or hitting things. The girls were not like that, so he felt dance is a way for girls to take out their emotions.

He told me about his older brother’s dance experience in high school and his cousin’s in Calgary.

My older brother, who is in high school right now, does dance in Mountain Douglas high school. He is in grade 11 and he said he had a really good experience that he has a lot better too. It is cool. He likes coming home and showing us different things and stuff like that. He has a the big dance performance soon for the school and he was lead role in the one he just finished, so he become a lot more interested in dance, a lot better in dance too. I don’t know anybody else that I have a personal connection with in dance. My cousin in

Calgary, she is in a performing arts school in Calgary for dance, so she likes that.

When she comes here, she likes to show us dance things and stuff like that.

He thought boys do not like dance much because they feel it is too girly and they do not realize that there is more to dance than just ballet contemporary stuff and kind of things like that.

Stereotypically, guys are supposed to be the big scary, muscular athletes that fight a lot, yell, watch football and so on. The girls are supposed to be non-aggressive and like dance. Dance is similar to sport, but it is not rough. It is a real athletic challenge of your body but not like hitting someone else as in a lot of sports.

From the students' answers, a variety of reasons contribute to a dislike of dance. It should be noted that society, family, peers, media, public and other factors influence a student's attitude toward dance. Especially for boys, there is a stereotype of male dancers that dance was a girls' activity. Lisa believed:

Generally I think boys and girls both like to dance, but as you get older you get a little more shy or self-conscious of about dancing in front of your peers. It can be hard to get over. Also, there is still the stereotype that dance is more for girls than for boys, as you get older. I think it is silly, it does not make sense, but it does exist, so we keep working to try to get over that.

Students' personal insights also affect students' dance experience. For example, some students do not have the confidence to dance. Some of them are too shy to express themselves or too nervous to perform in public. The type of dance, music, and dance teacher also influences students' interest in dance.

In contrast, the reasons for liking dance were diverse. Based on the four students' interviews, having fun is one of the main reasons for liking dance.

As Macdonald (2010) noted, "Dancing is a creative and collaborative activity so can encourage fun and social interaction, leading to increased happiness." In addition, enjoying the movements, cooperating with peers, liking the music, getting achievement from dance, helping one's expression, getting flow, and releasing stress also contributed to why do some boys and girls like dance.

Future Teaching

I asked Lisa about her future teaching. I was trying to explore what kind of experiences in the two classes would influence how she would teach in the future and what other strategies or pedagogical approaches she would use to develop her practice.

Teamwork

Lisa told me that, based on the way this project had helped her reflect on her teaching, she would try to do more teamwork, because it worked very well and engaged the students. Students got more engaged in teamwork because it offered a chance for them to control and arrange the dance by themselves, rather than having the teacher direct them how to dance. Students were able to create a dance based on what they liked, which they enjoyed and they got a sense of achievement when they completed their own dance.

Earlier feedback by moving the performance

Lisa would like to give students performance feedback earlier in the course to allow them to change their performance. It would help them to understand the performance project and improve their dancing skill and choreography ability. She said:

I think what I would like to do differently is actually have the dance performance in the class before the last class, so we have bit of time to do some reflecting. If it is in the last class, it kind of hard because it is very rushed. So I think what I am going to do next time is to provide some time for feedback, and go through the feedback, say, “Okay maybe when we do it again next year, take these things into consideration.”

Lisa told me that she would move the performance to the class before last so that students have more time to review their performance. She said:

I think spending more time at the beginning of the project would be good. I will talk about expectations and give them some more examples such as spending a bit more time talking about what makes it good, what makes the performance great, and spending more time with it.

Combine dance and drama together in the course to engage students

Lisa had some new ideas about next year’s dance and drama course. She told me that she would like to combine dance and drama together in the course, in order to increase interest and engage students. She said:

It’s a constant process of thinking about what is working and what I can try differently to have them more engaged. I think the biggest thing is that I am trying to get them to want to do the dance and be really excited about it. Because some kids totally are, they come here really for that, but other kids are more resistant, so, trying to break that down a little bit.

Lisa told me that she would like to co-ordinate drama with dance movements. For example, when students do the “cross” floor section, she would give them some different imagery to draw on. For example:

Move your body like a snake or move your body like a bear or clown or give them some kind of a little suggestion, and then see what they do with that. It is not “Do this dance step,” but move your body in such a way, so it is little more open.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the teaching approaches that promote children’s engagement in dance to enhance their enjoyment of dancing, and reduces stress. The study used an autoethnography to help frame the shared passion for learning and teaching dance between the research and the dance teacher participant. This sharing help negotiate the researcher’s entry into the dance culture of the teachers’ class. The dominant method of the study was ethnographic with participant observations of grade 6 and grade 8 dance classes over three months and interviews with the teacher and students from the class. Observations were supplemented by interviews with students and the teacher. The research analysed the critical memories that influence a middle school teacher’s practice as a dance teacher. The study asked: “What does teaching dance in local middle school look like? How does a dance teacher use different strategies to engage both girls and boys? Why do some girls and boys like to dance and others do not?” In addressing these questions, it became clear how much the teacher’s personal experiences before becoming a teacher influenced her teaching process.

It can be seen that the teacher's teaching methods were connected with flow, happiness, and process theories. More specifically, Lisa was using purposeful pedagogy such as music, following students' interests, giving positive feedback and suggestions, and making ongoing assessments to enhance students' understanding of dance, make the course "fun," and to engage students in performer and assessor roles in the course. The ongoing assessments used during her teaching process enabled the students to develop greater understanding of their dance movements and become more engaged. Ongoing assessment was not to compare students; they could dance without competing with each other. This made students less stressed and encouraged more enjoyment and fun. Also, ongoing assessment was based on how much effort and energy students put in during the course. Students got prompt feedback to build up their dance skills. As they noted their improvement in each class, they became more interested and engaged in dance.

Lisa was creating trust with students by helping in their projects, encouraging students to work in a group, and mixing genders in groups in order to foster an open, trusting, supportive and safe atmosphere in which students could enjoy the class and move with a sense of natural freedom. In addition, Lisa worked with groups and sought to create a student-directed learning process to improve their cooperative skills and dance skills.

Providing good quality movement was another important pedagogy during the dance class. When it was included Lisa would often use directed instruction, offering students a sense of what high-quality dance looked like. This quality included different forms of dance styles and background. Lisa sought out strategies of making the balance between finding a suitable level for students while encouraging high-quality movement.

From Lisa's pedagogical approach we can see that the proper class setting and structure helps students of all ability levels to become involved in the dance class. As flow theory indicated, flow happens in situations that involve challenge, but not so much challenge as to produce anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 46).

In addition, there were some shy girls and nervous or resistant boys in the classes. Lisa engaged them by removing the "girly" attitude from class and often told them to "give it a go" and built up their confidence by noting what they did well and how they were being appropriately creative.

Lastly, Lisa showed how to deal with exceptional students, those whose challenges extend beyond learning to dance. Lisa was patient and always engaged the exceptional students, keeping open the opportunities to engage. This strategy meant that students such as Neil could feel joy at being a part of dance. Seeing him do a good job at the final performance with his group members was very heart-warming.

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Appendix A

Kindergarten

- moving in response to a variety of sounds and music
- movements to represent characters, themes, and topics
- moving safely in personal space and general space
- moving in a variety of levels, pathways, and directions
- using a variety of body shapes
- moving in time to a beat
- dance for a variety of purposes
- willingness to perform dance
- performance skills

Grade 1

- moving expressively in response to a variety of sounds and music
- movements to represent patterns, characters, themes, and topics
- awareness of the creative process
- moving safely in personal space and general space
- moving in a variety of levels, pathways, dynamics, and directions
- using a variety of body shapes
- moving in time to a beat
- awareness of a variety of dances
- willingness to perform dance
- performance skills

Grade 2

- moving expressively in response to a variety of sounds and music
- movement sequences based on patterns, characters, themes, and topics
- steps in the creative process
- moving safely in personal space and general space
- moving in a variety of levels, pathways, dynamics, and directions
- using a variety of body shapes
- moving in time to rhythms, meters, and tempo
- similarities and differences among dances
- reasons people dance
- willingness to rehearse and perform dance
- performance skills

Grade 3

- moving expressively in response to a variety of sounds and music
- movement sequences based on patterns, characters, themes, and topics
- use of the creative process to create dance
- moving safely in personal space and general space
- moving in a variety of levels, pathways, dynamics, and directions
- using a variety of body shapes
- moving in time to rhythms, meters, and tempo
- similarities and differences among dances
- reasons people dance
- willingness to rehearse and perform dance
- performance skills

Grade 4

- moving in response to a variety of sounds, music, images, and feelings
- movement sequences based on choreographic forms
- creative process, with emphasis on exploring and selecting
- elements of movement in combination
- principles of movement

Grade 5

- moving in response to a variety of sounds, music, images, and feelings
- movement sequences based on choreographic forms
- creative process, with emphasis on selecting and combining
- elements of movement in combination
- principles of movement

Grade 6

- moving in response to a variety of sounds, music, images, and feelings
- movement sequences based on choreographic forms
- creative process, with emphasis on combining and refining
- elements of movement in combination
- principles of movement

Grade 7

- moving in response to a variety of sounds, music, images, and feelings
- movement sequences based on pattern and narrative choreographic forms
- creative process, with emphasis on refining and reflecting
- elements of movement in a variety of combinations
- principles of

- techniques associated with particular dance styles
- safety and health choices affecting dance
- dances from a variety of contexts
- dance in the community
- rehearsing dance for presentation
- performance skills
- analyzing own and others' dance work

- comparing techniques associated with particular dance styles
- safety and health choices affecting dance
- distinguishing features of dances from a variety of contexts
- personal opportunities for dance in the community
- rehearsing dance for presentation
- performance skills
- analyzing own and others' dance work

- comparing techniques associated with particular dance styles
- applying safety and health considerations to dance
- comparing dances from a variety of contexts
- personal opportunities for dance
- rehearsing dance for presentation
- performance skills
- analyzing own and others' dance work

- movement
- demonstrating techniques associated with particular dance styles
- applying safety and health considerations to dance
- comparing dances from a variety of contexts
- personal opportunities for lifelong participation in dance
- rehearsing dance for specific performance settings
- performance skills
- analyzing own and others' choreography and performances

Appendix B

| | Grade 8 | Grade 9 | Grade 10 |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Elements of movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate dance techniques associated with particular genres • apply principles of movement(alignment, balance, breathing, flexibility, strength) to dance • apply principles of fitness, health, and safety to dance • use elements of movement in a variety of combinations, as appropriate to the given genre or purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate dance techniques associated with particular genres • apply principles of movement(alignment, balance, flexibility, strength, breathing) to dance • apply principles of fitness, health, and safety to dance • use elements of movement in a variety of combinations, as appropriate to the given genre or purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate competent use of dance techniques specific to particular genres • apply principles of movement(alignment, breathing, balance, flexibility, strength) to dance • apply principles of fitness, health, and safety to dance • use elements of movement in a variety of combinations, as appropriate to the given genre or purpose |
| Creation & composition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •create movement in response to the expressive elements of sound and music • transform a given dance sequence for a specific purpose • choreograph a movement sequence for a variety of environments and purposes • apply the creative process to revise and refine dance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •create movement in response to a range of stimuli • identify and use dance as metaphor or analogy • distinguish among choreographic forms • transform a given dance sequence • choreograph dances for a variety of environments and purposes • apply the creative process to revise and refine dance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •create movement to respond to or represent abstract ideas • demonstrate use of choreographic forms • transform a dance sequence • use technical elements of stagecraft to create desired effects in dance • create and demonstrate a dance sequence in a chosen genre or style and for a given purpose |
| Presentation & performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •rehearse and perform dance for a specific environment • demonstrate dance movements in the appropriate style for the chosen genre or choreography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •rehearse and perform dance for a specific environment • demonstrate dance movements in the appropriate style for the chosen genre or choreography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •rehearse and perform dance for a specific environment • demonstrate dance movements in the appropriate style for the chosen genre or choreography |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to a range of dance experiences as performer, participant, and audience, demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an awareness of a sense of community - audience and performer etiquette - performance skills - respect for others' contributions • use established criteria to analyze the work of self and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to a range of dance experiences as performer, participant, and audience, demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an awareness of a sense of community - audience and performer etiquette - performance skills - respect for others' contributions • use established criteria to analyze the work of self and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze technical elements of stagecraft used in dance performances • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to a range of dance experiences as performer, participant, and audience, demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an awareness that dance strengthens the sense of community - audience and performer etiquette - performance skills - respect for others' contributions • use established criteria to analyze structure, style, and meaning in dance |
| Dance & society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze dances of a variety of cultures, considering elements of movement, historical and social context, and use of music and stagecraft • describe the purposes of dance in various cultures • analyze roles in dance (e.g., of gender, status, age) • identify personal and career opportunities in dance (occupation, recreation, entertainment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the cultural context and evolution of a particular dance genre • describe the purposes of dance in various cultures • analyze roles in dance • identify personal and career opportunities in dance (occupation, recreation, entertainment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the cultural context and evolution of a particular dance genre • compare and contrast two or more styles of dance within a common cultural or historical context • analyze roles in dance • create a personal plan for lifelong involvement in dance as a career, recreation, or entertainment |

Appendix C

| | Performance Grade 11 | Performance Grade 12 |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Elements of movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refine techniques specific to one or more genres • improve their control of the principles of movement • distinguish the definitive styles of two or more genres in terms of the elements of movement • identify the impact of fitness, health, and safety on dance technique • apply appropriate terminology to describe technique | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refine techniques specific to two or more genres • apply fitness, health, and safety considerations to dance technique • apply appropriate terminology to describe technique |
| Creation & composition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move in response to the expressive elements of music • demonstrate abilities to improvise within a given structure • evaluate the structure, style, and meaning in dance in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical and aesthetic use of the elements of movement - dance genre and technique - use of roles - choreographic form and design - use of stagecraft • identify artistic choices available to performers in presenting choreography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move with sensitivity to the expressive elements of music • evaluate improvisation as a tool for refining performance • use established criteria to reflect on and refine dance performances from a range of contexts • justify their artistic choices in performance |
| Presentation & performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rehearse dances with attention to technical accuracy and aesthetic quality • demonstrate performance skills appropriate to a given style • demonstrate a clear interpretation of choreographic intent • apply stagecraft to enhance performance • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to the collaborative process of presenting dance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commitment to the rehearsal process - respect for others' contributions - body and mind management - arts administration and production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate technical accuracy and aesthetic quality in performing dance • demonstrate performance skills appropriate to a given style • articulate a clear interpretation of choreographic intent • demonstrate abilities to enhance performance through proficient use of stagecraft • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to the collaborative process of presenting dance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commitment to the rehearsal process - respect for others' contributions - body and mind management |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Dance & society | <p>tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adapt a performance for a given environment • identify the various social, cultural, and historical influences on dance • demonstrate the skills and attitudes necessary to participate as a dance performer within society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accepting direction - giving and receiving constructive criticism - taking appropriate risks - setting and revising personal goals for performance - practicing individual and group rights and responsibilities in dance performance - respecting diversity • establish a plan for lifelong participation in dance as a career or for recreation or entertainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arts administration and production design and application • adapt a performance for a chosen environment • evaluate the purpose of dance in a given social, historical, or cultural context • demonstrate the skills and attitudes necessary to participate as a dance performer within society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assuming leadership roles in a variety of contexts - actively seeking and applying constructive criticism - refining personal goals for performance - practicing individual and group rights and responsibilities in dance performance - respecting diversity • assess the influence of the work of various artists on students' own dances • evaluate career opportunities in dance performance |
| Elements of movement | <p>Choreography grade 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvise movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to extend understanding of the elements of movement - to expand known movement vocabulary in new applications • apply principles of movement to dance exploration • apply an understanding of fitness, health, and safety to choreography • use appropriate terminology to describe movement | <p>Choreography grade 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvise movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to extend understanding of the elements of movement - to expand known movement vocabulary in new applications • apply principles of movement to dance exploration • apply an understanding of fitness, health, and safety to choreography • use appropriate terminology to describe movement and staging • evaluate improvisation as a creative tool |
| Creation & composition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvise within a given structure, using the elements of movement as stimulus for exploration • create compositions for a variety of purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to respond to or represent a range of stimuli | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create compositions for a variety of purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to respond to or represent a range of stimuli - for a variety of audiences |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Presentation & performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for a given genre or style - to emphasize given elements of movement - for various performance group sizes • apply one or more of the principles of design to create dances in narrative and pattern choreographic forms • refine dance sequences to clarify and enhance the choreography • articulate own choreographic intent • select or create stagecraft elements for a chosen choreography • identify a variety of ways to record choreography • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to the role of the choreographer in presenting dance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to give direction - respect for others' contributions - commitment to the rehearsal process - ability to give and receive constructive criticism • use established criteria to analyze structure, style, and meaning in dance in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical and aesthetic use of the elements of movement - representation of style or genre - choreographic form, design, and roles - use of stagecraft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for a variety of settings - to represent different points of view • apply elements of movement to develop a choreographic motif • apply the principles of design to create dances in a wide range of pattern and narrative choreographic forms • evaluate their choreography in terms of choreographic intent • design stagecraft for a chosen choreography • apply one or more methods to record choreography • demonstrate skills and attitudes appropriate to the role of the choreographer in presenting dance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to lead a group effectively - respect for others' contributions - commitment to the rehearsal process - ability to seek and apply constructive criticism • assume the role of choreographer for a dance performance • evaluate structure, style, and meaning in dance in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical and aesthetic use of the elements of movement - representation of style or genre - choreographic form, design, and roles - use of stagecraft |
| Dance & society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate their goals in terms of the creative process • identify the influences of technology on choreography • compare the definitive styles of two or more choreographers • analyze the cultural influences and evolution of choreography in a variety of contexts • assess the role of choreography in responding to community needs • establish a plan for achieving personal goals for lifelong participation in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze cultural and historical influences on their choreography • evaluate the influences of technology on choreography • assess the function of dance in Canadian society • evaluate career opportunities in choreography |

dance as a career, for recreation, or for entertainment

Appendix D

Instrument: Interview Schedule for dance teacher first time

1. When did you first start to dance? When you think back to when you first started dancing, how do you feel about it? Can you think of an example that shows that feeling forming?
2. Why did you like dancing? What motivated you to become engaged in dance? Can you think of a particular occasion where you really felt committed to engaging in dance? How does that occasion connect to your commitment to teaching dance now?
3. What causes someone to enjoy dance and engage in dance? Can you think of a situation where someone you taught was really motivated and engaged? What do you think enabled that to happen?
4. What do you think is the general attitude of boys and girls to dance? Why? Depending on response ask.
 - a. Why do you think males (that you know) avoid dancing?
 - b. Why do you think females (that you know) avoid dancing?
5. Why do you think males tend not to like dancing as much as females?
6. What factors do you think can influence student's enjoyment of dance?
7. How do you think teachers should try to get more students, both boys and girls, to become engaged in dance?
8. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me about teaching dance?

Appendix E

Instrument: Interview Schedule for dance teacher third time

COURSE

1. What do you think of the dance courses you have just taught?
2. What were some memorable events during your teaching the course?

COMPARING CLASSES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

3. What were the difference between grade 6 and grade 8 students?
4. What contents difference between grade 6 and grade 8?
5. What were you feelings when you taught different ages students?
6. What kind of pedagogy did you use in the two courses? How well do you think they were? Can you think of any examples that show what you thought?
7. What other type of strategies or pedagogical approaches do you think you might have used or might try next time?

SPECIFIC STUDENTS

8. What particular students do you remember in your classes? What were some memorable events with the students that you remember and why? Grade 6 and grade 8 class.
(In relation to the students being interviewed maybe ask the same question)
9. How did you assess the students learning? What was this based on?
10. Which part of activities do you think students most engaged and were most interested in? Why?
11. What were some key experiences in your classes that will influence how you teach in the future teaching?

Appendix F

Instrument: Interview Schedule for students

1. What do you think of the dance course you have just experienced? Why?
2. What were some particularly memorable activities for you in the course? What made those activities memorable?
3. What were your feelings about dance before you took the course? Why was that? Now that you have completed the course what are your feelings about dance? Why? For example.
4. What were some important events in the course for you in relation to dance?
5. Refer to events from course (maybe with some images that the teacher has taken). What were you feelings when you were doing these activities? Why did you feel that way?
6. What do you think are boys general impression about dance?
7. What do you think are girls general impression about dance?
8. Why do you think girls tend to like dance more than boys?
9. What particular students do you remember in your class? What were some memorable events with the students that you remember and why?
10. Do you think the way Mrs X teaches dance has changed your attitude towards dance? In what ways and why?